

Dr. 'Ali Rabbani Gulpaygani

# DISCURSIVE THEOLOGY

VOLUME 1

Translated by
Dr. Mansoor Limba

بسم الله الرحمن الرحیم

# Discursive Theology Volume ١

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Dr. ‘Ali Rabbani Gulpaygani

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# Contents

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**point**

This text deals with a set of ideological and scholastic questions based upon Islamic theology from the perspective of Shīʿah Imāmiyyah school of thought. Reason and revelation have been the final reference and arbiter in decisions and evaluations. A .series of lessons surrounding recognition of God is presented

## Foreword

بسم اللّه الرّحمن الرّحيم

In the Name of Allah, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful

The Islamic seminaries (ḥawzah al-ʿilmiyyah) are the inheritors of the eternal heritage of the Divine knowledge and gnosis as well as the vanguards of the frontage and domain of the Islamic law and doctrines. This crucial mission has doubled the .responsibility of the religious scholars in the arena of training and education

The persistent worries and concern of the committed scholars, inquisitive researchers and sympathetic academics over the qualitative and quantitative modification and improvement of educational methods, texts and patterns toward the development, dynamism and efficiency of the educational system in the Islamic seminaries highlight .the need to review, modify and present new, innovative and effective textbooks

Of course, on one hand, the high standing and condition of the textbooks in the Islamic seminaries and the availability of the priceless legacy and valuable

assets of the classical texts of our pious predecessors and the integrity and credibility of their authors call for particular and due efforts, accurateness and reflection in the .rewriting, modification and writing of textbooks

On the other hand, the change and transformation in the orientations, needs, expectations, methods, and models in training and education, multiply the responsibilities of the administrators and officials dealing with education and research affairs as well as academic planning in the Islamic seminary, as they have to perform their functions constantly by presenting new and original categories, patterns and .frameworks and by improving the substance of textbooks

As such, on the basis of the abovementioned needs and concerns, Al-Muṣṭafā International University has embarked on reviewing, modifying and producing .textbooks, thereby typesetting, compiling and publishing hundreds of titles

Along this line, while keeping the originality and substantial richness of the surviving precious treasures of the past scholars and by utilizing the educational technology and observing the modern principles, standards and patterns, it strives to present texts compatible with the objectives and within the framework of the approved .programs and subjects, intellectual level, and expectations of the students

Walking along this long and winding road necessitates the all-out support and cooperation of the esteemed professors, experts, academic directors, and students. By offering their suggestions, criticisms and opinions, they could help us in correctly .and successfully treading this difficult and tortuous path

We take this opportunity to express our utmost gratitude to those who have done their best to bring this project

to fruition, and in particular, to Professor 'Alī Rabbānī Gulpāygānī for writing the book,(١) and to Dr. Mansoor Limba for translating it. We do appreciate all their sincere .efforts

Seyed Hashem Moosavi

Al-Muṣṭafā International

Makati City, Metro Manila, Philippines

٢٠١٣

## Preface

بسم اللّه الرّحمن الرّحيم

In the Name of Allah, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful

Reflection, intellection and freewill are among the most manifest peculiarities of the human being. Throughout his life, man engages in the discovery of the universe by utilizing these features and on the basis of which he chooses a particular way and order in a bid to give answers to his material and spiritual needs. In other words, human actions in both the individual and social realms of his life demand that they .emanate and must be patterned from a kind of attitude about the universe

The totality of these methods and attitudes is the same with what is technically called "religion" which may vary according to the type of worldview of individuals. In a broader classification, religion can be divided into two, viz. theistic and atheistic religion. In the same manner, theistic religion can be classified into monotheistic and non-monotheistic, and monotheistic religion, in turn, can be grouped into original .((immune from distortion) and non-original (distorted

On this basis, man has never been and will never be able to live without religion. What is meant by those who technically have no religion is that they have not accepted the theistic religion, and the great mission of the prophets of God is

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۱- ‘Alī Rabbānī Gulpāygānī, ‘Aqā’idi Istidlālī ۱ (Qum: Research Department of the Center of Management of the Qum Religious Academy for Women, Autumn ۱۳۸۸ AHS (۲۰۰۹)), ۲۷۶ pages.

primarily to introduce the original theistic religion to mankind – the religion whose :main slogan is total submission to the One and Only God

( إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِندَ اللَّهِ الإِسْلامُ )

(Indeed, with Allah religion is Islam."(١"

Submission to God means not to worship anyone or anything other than God and to obey the Divine laws and decrees. These laws and decrees are what are technically :called sharīʻah

( لِكُلٍّ جَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ شِرْعَةً وَمِنْهَاجًا )

(For each [community] among you We had appointed a code [of law] and a path."(٢"

According to what have been mentioned in the verses of the Qur'an and Prophetic sayings (aḥādīth), the Divine sharīʻah is limited to five, viz. those of Prophet Nūḥ (Noah), Ibrāhīm (Abraham), Mūsā (Moses), ʻĪsā (Jesus), and the Holy Prophet (ʻa),(٣) .the last one being the final(۴) and known as the Islamic sharīʻah and Islamic creed

The heavenly sharīʻahs are identical and the same in terms of the foundations and principles of beliefs. The belief in the One and Unique Creator who has the loftiest Attributes of Perfection – "To Allah belong the Best Names" (۵) – and in the abode of the Hereafter in which all human beings will receive the appropriate recompense of all their good or bad deeds, as well as the belief in the Divine plans conveyed by the prophets to the people so as for them to distinguish the right path from the wrong one .are ideological foundations of all heavenly sharīʻahs

Yet, today, the only sharīʻah which must be compatible with the Divine



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Sūrat Āl ʻImrān ٣:١٩. Unless otherwise stated, the translation in this volume of -١ Qur'anic passages is adapted from Sayyid ʻAlī Qulī Qarā'ī's The Qur'an with a Phrase-by-Phrase English Translation (London: Islamic College for Advanced Studies, ٢٠٠۴).

[.[Trans

.Sūrat al-Mā'idah ۵:۴۸ -۲

He has prescribed for you the religion which He had enjoined upon Noah and" -۳ which We have [also] revealed to you, and which We had enjoined upon Abraham, Moses and Jesus, declaring, 'Maintain the religion, and do not be divided in it.' Hard on the polytheists is that to which you summon them" (Sūrat al-Shūrā ۴۲:۱۳). See also Al-Burhān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān, vol. ۴, pp. ۱۷۹-۱۷۸. The abbreviation, "'a" stands for the Arabic invocative phrase, 'alayhi's-salām, 'alayhim'us-salām, or 'alayhā's-salām (may peace be upon him/them/her), which is mentioned after the names of the prophets, [.angels, Imāms from the Prophet's progeny, and saints ('a). [Trans

Sūrat al-Aḥzāb ۳۳:۴۰; Ḥadīth on the Station of Guardianship (ḥadīth al-manzilah) in -۴ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, vol. ۵, ḥadīth ۵۶, p. ۴۷ (English Translation); Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, vol. ۴, .(ḥadīths ۵۹۱۳-۱۵, pp. ۱۲۸۴-۸۵ (English Translation

.Sūrat al-A'rāf ۷:۱۸۰ -۵

beliefs and precepts is the sharīʻah of Islam, because the other sharīʻahs have suffered from distortion and alteration, and incorrect beliefs such as the Trinity and extremism with respect to the prophets have crept in. The beliefs which are introduced, therefore, as the spiritual doctrines in the religions with heavenly origin are devoid of originality and credibility, and one must look for these spiritual doctrines .in the Islamic theology and not in those of Christianity and others

Islamic theology is nourished by two sources, viz. reason (ʻaql) and revelation (waḥyi). Firstly, by citing axiomatic and definitive principles, reason proves the existence, knowledge, power, and wisdom of God, and on the basis of these rational theological doctrines, it also establishes the necessity for revelation and the infallibility of the prophets. And through revelation and prophethood (nubuwwah), it recognizes anew .all the spiritual doctrines

Once again, by utilizing logical thinking, it embarks on elucidating and reinforcing those doctrines. On this basis, although Islamic theology is also anchored in revealed (wahyānī) texts and facts, it utilizes the method of reflection and intellection in all cases, because through a certain medium revealed facts are also traceable to rational .principles and foundations

Of course, the method of rational thinking can be demonstrative, falsification-oriented or dialectical. This is a sort of mission which is shouldered by the Muslim theologian and to which his endeavor and rhetoric is related. Since he aims at acquiring formal and real knowledge of the spiritual beliefs, nothing will be acceptable except demonstrative

proof, but if he aims at the enlightenment and teaching of the truth-seekers or the commitment and failure of the obstinate truth-evaders, he will adopt the methods of rhetoric and wholesome disputation. This is what God has commanded the Holy Prophet (ṣ) so as to invite mankind to the Divine religion with wisdom and beautiful preaching and argue with them in the best way.

( ادْعُ إِلَىٰ سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحِكْمَهِ وَالْمَوْعِظَهِ الْحَسَنَهِ وَجَادِلْهُم بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ )

"Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good advice and dispute with them in a manner that is best."(1)

Throughout the history of Islamic theology, various schools of theology and tendencies which have different views and varied approaches in ideological discourse have come into being. In citing outward meanings and texts of revelation or relying on reason and rational analyses, most of these schools of theology have gone into extremes.

The Ahl al-Ḥadīth(2) and Ḥanbalīs from among the Sunnīs and the Akhbārīs(3) have adopted extreme literalism, just as the Mu'tazilīs(4) have extremely kept aloof from the literal implications of revelation in their rational analyses and interpretations. In their midst, there have been also figures and schools (madhāhib) that assumed the middle way, as Abū 'l-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī(5) and Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī(6) had such an idea. As to whether they achieved their aim or not, it is another thing which can be dealt with elsewhere.

If we fairly and meticulously reflect on this, we will find out that out of these scholastic tendencies and schools of



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1- Sūrat an-Naḥl 16:125.

2- Ahl al-Ḥadīth refers to many historical and modern Muslim movements that emphasize the use of ḥadīth in matters of religious faith and practices, as opposed to the Ahl al-Rayy or 'the people of rhetorical theology'. [Trans.]

۳- Akhbārī: follower of Akhbarism (akhbāriyyah), a movement, which started within the Shī'ah world about four hundred years ago. Its originator was Mullā Muḥammad Amīn ibn Muḥammad Sharīf al-Astarābādī (d. ۱۰۳۳ AH/۱۶۲۳-۲۴). He openly attacked the Shī'ah mujtahids in his work al-Fawā'iḍ al-Madaniyyah, vehemently contesting the Uṣūlīs' claim that reason is one of the sources of fiqh. The Uṣūlīs' hold the Qur'an, the Sunnah, reason, and ijma' (consensus) as valid sources for deduction of the rules of sharī'ah. The Akhbārīs accepted the validity of only the Sunnah and rejected the rest. Understanding the Qur'an, they claimed, is beyond the capacity of a commoner, being restricted exclusively to the Ahl al-Bayt ('a). [Trans.]

۴- Mu'tazilī: follower of Mu'tazilah, a Muslim school of theology that flourished in the ۸th-۱۰th centuries Baṣrah and Baghdad, which asserts that since knowledge is derived from reason ('aql), the injunctions of God are accessible to rational thought and inquiry, and reason is the 'final arbiter' in distinguishing right from wrong. [Trans.]

۵- Abū 'l-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī (died ۳۳۰ AH): the founder of Ash'ariyyah school of theology.

۶- Abū Manṣūr Māturīdī (died ۳۳۳ AH): the founder of Māturīdī school of theology.

Muslim theology, the only school (madhhab) which has correctly adopted the middle path is the school of the Holy Prophet's Ahl al-Bayt ('a). They are the ones whom the Holy Prophet (ṣ)(١) has called the Lesser of the Two Weighty Things (thiql al-aṣghar) alongside the Qur'an which is the Greater of the Two Weighty Things (thiql al-akbar), and clinging to them as well as to the Qur'an is the source of salvation and freedom (from deviation.(٢)

In another statement, the Prophet (ṣ) has likened them to the Ark of Noah(٣) and whoever embarks on it shall be saved from storm which does not refer here to the storm of wind and drowning in the seas but the storm of capricious and fallacious views and ideas. And anyone who turns away from it will drown. Their approach – as Imām 'Alī ('a) has stated – is to move along the middle way, and not to deviate toward the left or right. It is in this way that the Book (Qur'an) and the Sunnah will become (immune from any type of distortion and alteration.(٤)

The Imāmiyyah theologians – whether those who had engaged in verbal jihād in the presence of the infallible Imāms ('a) or those who have vigilantly defended the sanctity of the ideological beliefs during the Period of Occultation ('aṣr al-ghaybah)(٥) – have trodden the path of the infallible Imāms ('a). Because of their being not immune from error, one cannot approve of each and every theoretical view and practical



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١- The abbreviation, "ṣ", stands for the Arabic invocative phrase, ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa ālihi wa sallam (may God's blessings and peace be upon him and his progeny), which is mentioned after the name of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ). [Trans.]

٢- It alludes to the Tradition on Two Weighty Things (ḥadīth al-thaqalayn) which is one of the uninterruptedly transmitted (mutawātir) ḥadīths. See, inter alia, Muslim, Al-Ṣaḥīḥ, (English Translation), Book ٣١, ḥadīths ٥٩٢٠-٣; AlTirmidhī, Al-Ṣaḥīḥ, vol. ٥, pp. ٦٢١-٢, ḥadīths ٣٧٨٦, ٣٧٨٨; vol. ٢, p. ٢١٩; Al-Nasā'ī, Khaṣā'iṣ 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, ḥadīth ٧٩. [Trans.]

٣- It alludes to the Tradition on the Ark of Noah (ḥadīth al-ṣafīnah) which is acceptable to and relied upon by ḥadīth scholars (muḥaddithūn). See, inter alia, Al-Ḥakim al-

Nayshābūrī, Al-Mustadrak ‘alā ’ṣ-Ṣaḥīḥayn, vol. ٣, p. ١٥١; vol. ٢, p. ٣۴٣; Al-Ṣūyūṭī, Al-Dhurr al-Manthūr, vol. ١, pp. ٧١-٧٢; Ibn Ḥajar al-Makkī, Al-Sawā’iq al-Muhriqah, p. ١۴٠. [.[Trans

۴ - As recorded in Nahj al-Balāghah, Sermon ١۶, Imām ‘Alī (‘a) said: الْيَمِينُ وَالشِّمَالُ مُضَلَّةٌ، وَالطَّرِيقُ الْوُسْطَى هِيَ الْجَادَّةُ عَلَيْهَا بَاقِي الْكِتَابِ وَآثَارُ النُّبُوَّةِ. “On right and left there are misleading paths. Only the middle way is the [right] path which is the Everlasting Book and the traditions of the Prophet.”

۵ - Minor Occultation (ghaybat al-ṣughrā): the period of about ٧٠ years (٢۶٠ AH/٨٧٢ CE-٣٢٩ AH/٩٣٩ CE) when the Twelfth Imām Muḥammad al-Mahdī was hidden from the physical plane but remained in communication with his followers through a succession of four appointed deputies, viz., ‘Uthmān ibn Sa‘īd, Muḥammad ibn ‘Uthmān, Ḥusayn ibn Rūḥ, and ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad. At the death of the fourth deputies no successor was named, and the Major Occultation (ghaybat al-kubrā) began, and continues to this day. See Muhammad Bāqir as-Sadr and Murtadā Mutahhari, Awaited Saviour (Karachi: Islamic Seminary Publications), http://www.islam.org/saviour/index.htm; [١١] Jassim M. Husain, The Occultation of the Twelfth Imām: A Historical Background (London: Muhammadi Trust, ١٩٨٢); Ibrāhīm Amīni, Al-Imām Al-Mahdī: The Just Leader of Humanity, trans. ‘Abdul ‘Azīz Sachedina (Qum: Ansariyan Publications), http://www.al-islam.org/mahdi/nontl/index.htm [١٢]. [Trans.]

.approach that they have

What is important, however, is that their strategic policy has been designed and organized according to the fundamentals and principles of the school of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a). In every period of time, they have played their theological role according to the needs and circumstances and in the arena of writing and compiling, they have been able to produce valuable theological texts and now, Islamic thought and .conceptual civilization exists in a number of important sources

It is evident that the precedence of change and development requires that this approach must persist, and taking into account the changes and needs of the time, the Muslim theologians must assume their theological responsibility in the realm of .speaking and writing

The present book is a step toward this direction. It deals with a set of ideological and scholastic questions based upon Islamic theology from the perspective of Shī‘ah Imāmiyyah school of thought. Reason and revelation (the Qur’an and Sunnah) have .been the final reference and arbiter in decisions and evaluations

Meanwhile, the ideas and opinions of Islamic thinkers, Shī‘ah Imāmiyyah scholars in particular, have been amply utilized. With the aim of knowing the truth and exemplifying honest scholarship, the sources and references of the views and opinions of others have been cited and sometimes, their names or titles are even mentioned in the text or footnote. As pointed out, the citation of the views and opinions of others aims at knowing the truth and exemplifying honest scholarship as well

as to revive the names and profiles of the thinkers who have suffered a lot in the way .of religious pursuits and for whom blind following and imitation have no meaning

Structurally, the sections of this book have been arranged in textbook style, and at the end of every lesson, related questions have been selected, thus providing for a summary of the discussion, on one hand, and an opportunity for self-test, on the other hand. Since brevity and conciseness can be regarded as a principle in any textbook, this approach has been taken into account in writing this book. It has been tried, nevertheless, that the passage of the book be clear and fluent and free from unfamiliar and obscure terms and complex or difficult phrases. Be that as it may, the author does not regard his work as free from any form of defect or error in terms of content and structure, and he will most openly and sincerely welcome constructive .criticisms of the experts

In closing, I deem it necessary to mention that in the cover of the previous edition of this book, what was erroneously written as the title is Tarjumeh-ye Kitāb-e Muḥāḍirāt fī 'l-Ilāhiyyāt. This state of affairs had created ambiguities and amphibologies to the dear students and seminarians. Henceforth, this is to note that this book entitled 'Aqā'id-e Istidlālī (Discursive Theology) is an independent work and it is neither a .translation nor exposition of Muḥāḍirāt fī 'l-Ilāhiyyāt

Of course, since both books are written by the same

author and, on the other hand, the present book has been written with the aim of replacing the book Muḥāḍirāt fī ’l-Ilāhiyyāt for the Islamic seminaries for the respected ladies, the discussions in the present work will have a central role in understanding the subjects of the book Talkhīṣ al-Ilāhiyyāt as many sections and topics of both books are similar or the same. As such, it can be claimed that studying the book I‘tiqādāt-e Islāmī is a means of understanding the subjects of the book .Muḥāḍirāt fī al-Ilāhiyyāt

It is hoped that this work could strengthen and defend the Islamic doctrines and .elucidate them to the students of the genuine Islamic beliefs

Alī Rabbānī Gulpāygānī‘

The Islamic Seminary – Qum

Farvardīn ۲۱, ۱۳۸۴ AHS

Rabī‘ al-Awwal ۱, ۱۴۲۶ AH

## ?Lesson ۱: Why Should We Know God

### point

The question being posed in the context of the ideological discussions about God is this: why should we know God? What is the factor that prompts man to delve into the existence of God? What is the benefit of doing so? What is the harm of not paying :attention to it? Two questions, therefore, must be examined here

?What is the factor or factors that prompt man to delve into the existence of God .۱

?What is the benefit he may get in knowing God and having faith in Him .۲

In reply to the first question, Muslim theologians have given answers which we shall .examine here

### The Need for Preventing Serious Losses .۱

No intelligent person will ever doubt the necessity for preventing serious harms. The rule of "the necessity for preventing harm"

is considered one of the most enduring principles in human life, and centuries of experience in human life affirm its endurance. Whenever the loss or harm is more serious, the said principle becomes more decisive and conspicuous. In this case, the .probability of harm is already enough for man to think of ways to prevent loss

On the other hand, throughout history, there had been outstanding personalities called prophets and Divine leaders who have emerged, talked about the existence of God, the Divine laws and decrees, and rewards and punishments in the Hereafter, and called upon the people to believe in those doctrines and they themselves were sincerely devoted to the religion while faithfully abiding by their words. If ever from their words and actions there is no certainty about the existence of God, religion and .Divine order, the probability of their existence becomes stronger

It is evident that if such probability is correct, not paying attention to it means incurring extremely great and miserable loss. As such, reason dictates and instinct decrees that one must not be indifferent toward this probability but rather one must discuss and investigate it. On this basis, discussion and study about the existence of God and the heavenly religion becomes essential and definite. As a marginal note to :this reason, Muḥaqqiq Baḥrānī writes

اِنَّ دَفْعَ الضَّرَرِ الْمَظْنونِ الَّذی یَلْحَقُ بِسَبَبِ الْجَهْلِ بِمَعْرِفَهِ اللهِ واجِبٌ عَقْلاً، وَ وُجوبُ دَفْعِ ذلِکَ الضَّرَرِ مُسْتَلْزِمٌ لِوُجوبِ الْمَعْرِفَه.

To avoid probable harm as a result of not having knowledge of God“

is compulsory according to the dictate of reason, and the compulsoriness of avoiding this harm necessitates the compulsoriness of knowing God."(1)

### 2. The Need for Gratefulness to the Benefactor

According to reason, thanking one's benefactor is a desirable and essential act, and refusing to do so is undesirable and abominable. On the other hand, man enjoys enormous bounties in his worldly life. Although the non-existence of the Bestower or Giver of these bounties is possible, His existence is also possible. The second possibility, therefore, must be taken seriously and one must discuss about the existence or non-existence of a Benefactor, so that if ever He exists, gratitude must be expressed to Him.

In this regard, Muḥaqqiq Baḥrānī said:

اِنَّ الْعاقِلَ إذا فَكَّرَ فی خَلْقِهِ وَجَدَ آثارَ النِّعْمَهِ عَلَیْهِ ظاهِرَهً، وَ قَدْ تَقَرَّرَ فی عَقْلِهِ وُجوبُ شُکْرِ الْمُنْعِمِ، فَیَجِبُ عَلَیهِ شُکْرُهُ، فَیَجِبُ إذَنْ مَعْرِفَتُهُ.

"If a wise man reflects on His creation, he will find in himself signs of bounty, and the compulsoriness of thanking the Benefactor is consistent with the dictate of his reason and so he must thank the Benefactor. Therefore, knowing Him is obligatory."(2)

### 3. Sense of Curiosity

#### point

Sense of curiosity is one of the powerful human senses. Searching and discussing about the cause [or causes] of events and phenomena are among the clear manifestations of this innate feeling. According to the dictate of this innate tendency, man asks about the causes and reasons for every happening he witnesses.

This innate feeling stimulates him to search for the cause or causes of the totality of happenings in the universe. Just as each of the natural

١- Ibn Maytham Baḥrānī, Qawā’id al-Marām fī ‘Ilm al-Kalām, p. ٢٨.
٢- Ibid., p. ٢٩.

or unnatural events and phenomena has a cause or causes, does the totality of the events and phenomena in the universe have also a metaphysical cause or causes? From this perspective, delving into the existence of a Creator of the universe is a response to an innate need and feeling, i.e. the nature of knowing the cause.

In this regard, 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī said:

"If we do not regard the affirmation of this subject as innate in man (although it is), the essence of the discussion of the Creator of the universe is innate in man because he sees the universe as a whole, observing it as a single unit. And he wants to understand whether or not the cause which can be affirmed through his natural instinct about every phenomenon in the universe can also be affirmed about the universe as a whole."(١)

## The Benefits of Knowing God

In reply to the second question, it is worthwhile to note the following points:

Firstly, once the discussion is about rational and instinctive investigations, to ask about its benefit is not allowed because such a discussion is the benefit itself. The human being lives in a world whose beginning, end and origin he is not aware of. Naturally, he likes to know its beginning, end and origin. This knowledge in itself, apart from any other benefit it has, is desirable for him. It is not necessary for every scientific or theoretical issue to have definitely scientific benefit.

Secondly, belief and faith is God is one of the most useful and essential beliefs

p: ١٣

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١- Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī, Uṣūl-e Falsafeh wa Rawish-e Realism (The Principles of Philosophy and the Method of Realism), vol. ۵, p. ۴.

of the human being in life. From the individual perspective, belief and faith in God gives peace of mind and tranquility of the heart as well as nourishes moral virtues, and collectively, it guarantees the implementation of law and justice and the observance of the rights of one another.(١)

### Knowledge of God as the Fountainhead of All Knowledge

At the conclusion of this lesson, we shall quote some sayings of the infallible Imāms (‘a) in which knowing God has been regarded as the fountainhead of all knowledge:

١. One day, a man came to the Holy Prophet (ṣ), requesting for the most astonishing of knowledge (gharā’ib al-‘ilm). The Holy Prophet (ṣ) asked him, “What do you think is the fountainhead of all knowledge (ra’s al-‘ilm) such that you are asking for the most astonishing of them?” The man replied, “What is the fountainhead of knowledge [by the way]?” The Holy Prophet (ṣ) said, “That is to know God as He deserves it.”(٢)

٢. Imām ‘Alī (‘a) said about the station of knowing God:

مَعْرِفَةُ اللهِ اَعْلَى الْمَعارِفِ.

“Knowledge of Allah is the highest level of knowledge.”(٣)

٣. Imām al-Ṣādiq (‘a) said:

إنَّ أفْضَلَ الفَرائِضِ وَأوْجَبَها عَلَى الإنْسانِ مَعْرِفَةُ الرَّبِّ وَالإقْرارُ لَهُ بِالعُبودِيَّهِ.

“The most superior of all obligations and commandments is to know God and acknowledge Him through servitude [to Him].”

### Review Questions

١. Write the first factor that prompts man to delve into the existence of God.

٢. State the relationship between the need for being grateful to the Beneficent God and the obligation of knowing Him.

٣. State the role of the human nature (fiṭrah) in knowing God.

Enumerate the .۴



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.(Ibid., p. ۸ (footnote -۱

.Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, Al-Tawḥīd, section (bāb) ۴۰, ḥadīth ۵ -۲

.Ghurar al-Ḥikam wa Durar al-Kalam, p. ۸۱ -۳

.benefits of knowing God

Write the saying of the Prophet (ṣ) about knowledge as the fountainhead of all .۵ .knowledge

## Lesson ۲: The Ways of Knowing God

### point

Before embarking on the discussion about the proofs of the existence of God and an examination of the Divine Attributes, it is necessary to answer this important and key question: can the human being know God or not? And in case he can, what is the way of doing so? This is because if the answer to this question is negative, any sort of .discussion and discourse about theology is vain and useless

Here, two general outlooks have been put forth, i.e. those of the affirmatives and the negatives. The rationalists and intuitionists regard God as knowable and the way of knowing Him as open to mankind. The sensationalists and literalists give a negative reply, however, to the above question and consider mankind incapable of knowing .God. Now, we shall examine and elucidate these outlooks

### The Rationalists

The rationalists refer to the group of thinkers who have accepted the authority and credibility of reason or intellect ('aql) in knowledge [or the process of knowing], regarding the rational principles and fundamentals as the foundations of knowledge. They are of the opinion that without formally acknowledging the intellect and rational principles, no knowledge can be attained about the human being and even sensory and external pieces of knowledge are based on rational foundations, let alone empirical scientific pieces of knowledge and those pieces of information which are substantiated by the text and outward meanings

.(of the revelation (wahy

Aristotle(1) and his followers in Ancient Greece, Descartes(2) and his followers in the West, Fārābī,(3) Ibn Sīnā,(4) and all Imāmiyyah and Mu'tazilite theologians (mutakallimīn) have been proponents of this outlook. Reason also occupies a high position in Māturīdiyyah theology. For the Ash'arites,(5) however, reason ('aql) is (theoretically valid to some extent but not so in practice.(6

At any rate, the philosophers and theologians in the Muslim world believe that God can be known through rational thinking, although there is a difference of opinions on the limit of the intellect's capability. For example, the proofs presented to prove the existence of God and the methods adopted to discuss the Attributes of God are not .the same

The proponents of this viewpoint have emphasized that adopting the rational way of attaining knowledge about God and understanding metaphysical truths is not an easy job and it requires special skill, talent and ability; otherwise, the desirable result will .not be obtained and in many instances, it may even lead to deviation

:In this regard, Shahīd Muṭahharī(7) has said

The limitedness of the meanings of words and expressions, on one hand, and the" minds' familiarity with tangible and physical concepts, on the other hand, make it difficult to think and reflect on metahphysical issues. In order to be prepared for metaphysical reflections, the mind gradually undergoes certain processes… No doubt, when the meanings and concepts of the Divine wisdom want to manifest in the realm of philosophical intellects, it requires a particular mental acumen and intellectual



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Aristotle (۳۸۴-۳۲۲ BCE): a Greek philosopher, a student of Plato and teacher of - ۱ Alexander the Great. He wrote on many subjects, including physics, metaphysics, poetry, theater, music, logic, rhetoric, politics, government, ethics, biology, and

zoology. Together with Plato and Socrates (Plato's teacher), Aristotle is one of the [.most important founding figures in Western philosophy. [Trans

René Descartes (۱۵۹۶-۱۶۵۰): French mathematician and the founding father of - ۲ modern philosophy. His theory of knowledge starts with the quest for certainty, for an indubitable starting-point or foundation on the basis alone of which progress is possible. This is eventually found in his celebrated 'Cogito ergo sum' which means "I think therefore I am." His main writings are Discourse on Method, The Meditations, Principles of Philosophy, The Passions of the Soul and Ruler for the Direction of the [.Mind. [Trans

Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī (known in the West as Alpharabius) (c. ۸۷۲-۹۵۰/۹۵۱ CE): a Muslim -۳ polymath (in the fields of cosmology, logic, music, psychology, and sociology) and one [.of the greatest scientists and philosophers of the world during his time. [Trans

Abū 'Alī al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Abd Allāh ibn Sīnā Balkhī, known as Abū 'Alī Sīnā Balkhī or Ibn -۴ Sīnā and commonly known in English by his Latinized name "Avicenna" (c. ۹۸۰-۱۰۳۷) was a Persian polymath and the foremost physician and philosopher of his time. He was also an astronomer, chemist, geologist, logician, paleontologist, mathematician, physicist, poet, psychologist, scientist, and teacher. His important works include Al-Shifā' (an encyclopedic work covering, among other things, logic, physics and metaphysics), Al-Najāt (a summary of Al-Shifā'), and Al-Ishārāt or in full, Al-Ishārāt wa 't-Tanbīhāt (a latter work consisting of four parts, viz. logic, physics, metaphysics, [.and mysticism). [Trans

.(Ash'arites ('ashā'irah): followers of Abū '-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī (died ۳۳۰ AH -۵

For further information in this regard, see the book Darāmadī bar 'Ilm-e Kalām (An -۶ .Introduction to Scholastic Theology) by the author

Murtada Mutahhari (۱۹۲۰-۷۹) was a leading theoretician of the ۱۹۷۹ Islamic- ۷ Revolution in Iran. As an accomplished scholar of Islamic sciences, he played a pivotal role in forming the modern Islamic discourse which served as the foundation of the revolution. With close to ninety works on different subjects to his credit, he is considered one of the leading thinkers of the global Islamic movement in the .twentieth century

capacity which is totally different from literary, technological, natural or mathematical acumen. The mind must develop in a particular dimension or aspect so as to acquire (acumen for such ideas."(1)

The Holy Qur'an and traditions (aḥādīth) endorse this method, and the proofs and pieces of evidence in criticizing the viewpoint of the literalists will be stated. Here, we suffice ourselves with quoting the following verse which regards reflection (tafakkur) on the system of creation as one of the characteristics of those who possess intellects :(ūli'l-albāb) for which they are praised

( إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلاَفِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لآيَاتٍ لِّأُوْلِي الألْبَابِ ۝ الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللّهَ قِيَامًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىَ جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذا بَاطِلاً سُبْحَانَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ )

Indeed in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of night and" day, there are signs for those who possess intellects. Those who remember Allah standing, sitting, and lying on their sides, and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth [and say] 'Our Lord, You have not created this in vain! Immaculate are (You. Save us from the punishment of the Fire."(2)

**The Intuitionists**

The intuitionists are of the opinion that the existence of God and metaphysical realities are knowable by the human being, but not through the agency of reason and the method of reflection (tafakkur) and intellection (ta'aqqul); rather, through the agency of the heart and the method of illumination (ishrāq) and inner intuition or .(witnessing (shuhūd-e durūnī

Some intuitionists have regarded



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1- Introduction) ٣٣-٣۴ .Uṣūl-e Falsafeh wa Rawish-e Realism, vol. ۵, pp).

2- Sūrat Āl 'Imrān ٣:١٩٠-١٩١.

reason as totally incapable of knowing God, but other intuitionists do not consider it sufficient although they have stressed its being essential and they have also acknowledged its ability to some extent. Muslim and non-Muslim mystics advocate the method of mystical intuition (shuhūd-e ‘irfānī) in knowing God. Some modern Western philosophers and religious psychologists and psychoanalysts have also .opted for this method

### Assessment

Although it is acceptable in knowing God and has an important function, this method still needs the rational method. Firstly, in intuitive perceptions, there is always the possibility of satanic tricks and insinuations, and to detect them would require rational principles and rules. Secondly, intuitive method is personal in nature and incapable of .being proved to others, except through rational method and philosophical principles

For this reason, great mystics and philosophers have highlighted the mystical method’s need for rational and philosophical method which has a higher and more perfect state. Regarding mysticism’s need for intellection (ta‘aqqul) and reasoning :(istidlāl), Ḥakīm Lāhījī has said

The human being has two ways to [know] God, the Exalted. One is the outward way“ and the other is inward. The outward way is the path of reasoning (istidlāl) while the inward way is the path of spiritual wayfaring (sulūk). The path of reasoning takes precedence over the path of spiritual wayfaring, for as long as one does not know what spiritual station (manzil) is, he will not be able to seek the way leading to the (spiritual station.”(۱

Elsewhere, he has also said, “Prior to

p: ۱۸

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.Ḥakīm Lahījī, Gawhar-e Murād, p. ۳۴ -۱

the stabilization of theosophy (ḥikmah) and scholastic theology (‘ilm al-kalām), Sufi claims are [nothing but] demagoguery and fraud.”(۱)

## The Sensualists

### point

The sensualists are those who regard the way of knowing realities as limited to sensory observation and experiment. Sensualism has a long precedence in the history of human thought. The Skeptics of Ancient Greece upheld the primacy of experience and opposed rational philosophy. The new form of empiricism can be traced to the ۱۷th century.

Scholars and philosophers such as Thomas Hobbes,(۲) Pierre Gassendi(۳) and David Hume(۴) were among the prominent proponents of sensualism. The notion that sensory perception is the fountainhead and criterion for knowledge has been the ultimate product of their intellectual activity.(۵)

Since perception and sensory experience are only through the five senses, the existence and Attributes of God cannot be proved or disproved on the basis of the foundations of sensualism. As such, they oppose both the theists and materialists, because according to them, there is no way of proving or disproving for mankind the metaphysical world.

### Assessment

Sensory empiricism (primacy of the sensory perception) is unacceptable because there is a set of epistemological concepts and principles which cannot be understood by sensory perception and at the same time, they cannot be denied; that is, without them, sensory perceptions are also impossible. Of the concepts used in scientific and non-scientific discourses, the concepts of necessity or essential (ḍarūrah), refusal or abstention (imtinā‘) and probable (iḥtimāl) play a vital role, and none of them can be perceived by the senses.

The law of

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۱ - Ibid., p. ۳۸. In this regard, see Āyatullāh Jawādī ‘Āmulī, Shinākht dar Qur’ān (Knowledge in the Qur’an), pp. ۳۷۹-۳۸۰.

۲ - Thomas Hobbes (۱۵۸۸-۱۶۷۹): English philosopher, mathematician and linguist who was one of the main philosophers that founded materialism. [Trans.]

۳ - Pierre Gassendi (۱۵۹۲-۱۶۵۵): French Catholic priest, philosopher and astronomer. [Trans.]

۴ - David Hume (۱۷۱۱-۱۷۷۶), Scottish historian and philosopher, who influenced the development of skepticism and empiricism, is considered one of the greatest skeptics in the history of philosophy. Hume thought that one’s subjective perceptions never provide true knowledge of reality and one can know nothing outside of experience. Accordingly, even the law of cause and effect was an unjustified belief. [Trans.]

۵- Paul Foulkes, Falsafeh-ye ‘Umūmī (General Philosophy), trans. Yaḥyā Mahdawī, pp. ۱۳۰-۱۳۱; Hans Reichenbach, Pidāyesh-ye Falsafeh-ye ‘Ilmī (The Rise of Scientific Philosophy), trans. Mūsā Akramī, pp. ۱۰۶-۱۰۷.

causation (causality) is another principle which the sensualists have regarded as definite. This is so while the cause-and-effect relationship – as Hume has also acknowledged – is not something tangible or sensible. Causation means an existent's dependence on another existent, and not succession (tawālī) or symmetry (taqārun) .of phenomena

The principle of non-contradiction(۱) is one of the most fundamental intellectual principles of man, and no idea or opinion, no matter how likely it may be, cannot be formulated without this principle. The said principle can never be perceived by the senses. Felicien Robert Challaye,(۲) who is himself a prominent empiricist, has :regarded two principles as the basis of inducement of empirical sciences

۱. Nature has order and law, and accident or chance does not happen in them (law of causation), and

۲. Every cause always brings about the same effect given a unified set of conditions (the principle of harmony in nature or harmony between the cause and the effect).(۳)

Moreover, it is true that every experiment depends on the observation of particular steps, which is discussed by the likes of Francis Bacon(۴) and Stuart Mill(۵) in a bid to know the real cause of every happening, but the element of experiment has not guaranteed the correctness or validity of those steps (methods). They thus have no option but to establish the correctness or validity of those steps through a sort of rational proof which they deny.(۶)

## The Literalists

### point

A group of Muslim traditionists (muḥaddithūn) does not regard reason and rational thinking as authoritative and permissible



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۱ - Principle or law of non-contradiction: the law of logic that it is not the case that p

and not-p. Contradiction is the final logical stopping point in that if a contradiction can be derived from a set of premises, then at least one of them is false. [Trans.]

۲ - Felicien Robert Challaye (۱۸۷۵-۱۹۶۷): an anti-colonialist French philosopher and journalist. [Trans.]

۳ - Felicien Robert Challaye, Shinākht-e Rawishhā-ye ʻUlūm (Knowledge of the Scientific Methods), trans. Yaḥyā Mahdawī, p. ۱۱۶.

۴ - Francis Bacon (۱۵۶۱-۱۶۲۶): an English philosopher, statesman, scientist, lawyer, jurist, and author who established and popularized an inductive methodology for scientific inquiry, often called the Baconian method or simply, the scientific method. [Trans.]

۵ - John Stuart Mill (۱۸۰۶-۷۳): a British philosopher, civil servant and an influential contributor to social theory, political theory, and political economy. [Trans.]

۶ - Murtaḍā Muṭahharī, Uṣūl-e Falsafeh wa Rawish-e Realism (The Principles of Philosophy and the Method of Realism), vol. ۲, p. ۹۷.

bases in knowing the religion, and they are of the opinion that the only means of knowing religious facts – whether pertaining to the roots or branches of religion – are the scriptural texts.

The Ḥanbalīs and Ahl al-Ḥadīth from among the Sunnīs and the Akhbarīs from among the Shī‘ah have subscribed to this idea, vehemently opposing rational (philosophical and theological) discussions of the issues on beliefs.

There is a well known story that someone asked Mālik ibn Anas (٩٣-١٧٩ AH) about the meaning of “Allah’s settlement on the Throne” as mentioned in this verse:

( الرَّحْمَٰنُ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ اسْتَوَىٰ )

“The All-beneficent, settled on the Throne.”[١]

In reply, Ibn Anas said:

اَلْاِسْتِواءُ مَعْلومٌ وَالْكِيْفِيَّهُ مَجْهولَةٌ وَالْايمانُ بِهِ واجِبٌ وَالسُّؤالُ عَنْهُ بِدْعَةٌ.

“The settlement is known; how God settles on the Throne is unknown; to believe in it is obligatory and to ask about it is bid‘ah (innovation in religion).”[٢]

Sufyān ibn ‘Uyaynah[٣] (died ١٩٨ AH) is reported to have said that the Attributes of God mentioned in the Qur’an must not be interpreted and a study about their meanings must not be done. Instead, they must be recited and one must keep silent about their meanings.

A group of the Akhbārīs from among the Shī‘ah who lived during the ١٠th and ١١th centuries AH were also of the same belief. In his introduction to Al-Asfār al-Arba‘ah, Ṣadr al-Muta’allihīn (Mullā Ṣadrā)[٤] expressed extreme regret for the way of thinking of these people, saying:

“Indeed we are afflicted by a group whose viewpoint fails to perceive the lights and secrets

.Sūrat Ṭā Hā ۲۰:۵ -۱

.Shahristānī, Al-Milal wa n-Nihal, vol. ۱, p. ۹۳ -۲

Abū Muḥammad Sufyān ibn ‘Uyaynah ibn Maymūn al-Hilālī al-Kūfī (۷۲۵-۸۱۵ CE): a -۳ prominent Sunnī religious scholar in Makkah from the third generation of Muslims [.referred to as the Tābi‘u al-Tābi‘īn (the Followers of the Followers). [Trans

Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī (۱۵۷۲-۱۶۴۱), better known as Mullā Ṣadrā or Ṣadr al-Muta’allihīn: -۴ the foremost representative of the Illuminationist (ishrāqī) School of Islamic [.philosophy whose magnum opus is Al-Asfār al-Arba‘ah (The Four Journeys). [Trans

of wisdom. They have regarded as heresy to reflect on celestial matters, divine knowledge and the glorious verses [of the Qur'an]. They treat as deviation any opposition to common beliefs. It is as if they were traditionalist Ḥanbalīs for whom the questions of obligatory (wājib) and possible (mumkin), eternal (qadīm) and contingent (ḥādith) are dubious. Their thinking does not go beyond what is tangible."(١)

After stating the beliefs of the Ahl al-Ḥadīth and Ḥanbalīs, Professor Muṭahharī has said:

"The view of Ḥanbalī and the Ahl al-Ḥadīth has still gained following, and some Shī'ah ḥadīth scholars in the latter periods have explicitly stated that even the question of the Oneness of God is totally a heavenly (devotional) issue and intellectually, there is no sufficient proof for it, and it is only through obedience to the dictate of religion that we are bound to believe that God is One."(٢)

### Assessment

Firstly, even assuming that heavenly truths must be known through "heavenly means and power", this principle has no contradiction with knowing these truths by means of reason because it (reason) is also a "heavenly element". As mentioned in traditions (aḥādīth), reason or intellect ('aql) is inward proof (ḥujjat-e bāṭinī) of God for mankind while the prophets are His outward proofs (ḥujaj-e ẓāhirī).(٣)

It is true that reason cannot discern all religious truths, but it is not totally incapable of knowing religious truths. In this regard, Imām 'Alī ('a) says:

لَمْ يُطْلِعِ الْعُقُولَ عَلَى تَحْدِيدِ صِفَتِهِ، ولَمْ يَحْجُبْهَا عَنْ وَاجِبِ مَعْرِفَتِهِ.

"He has not informed (human) wit about the limits



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١- Ṣadr al-Muta'allihīn, Al-Asfār al-Arba'ah, vol. ١, introduction.
٢- Murtaḍā Muṭahharī, Uṣūl-e Falsafeh wa Rawish-e Realism, vol. ٥, p. ١١.
٣- Uṣūl al-Kāfī, vol. ١, "Kitāb al-'Aql wa 'l-Jahl," ḥadīth ١٢.

of His qualities. Nevertheless, He has not prevented it from securing essential knowledge of Him."(1)

Secondly, by denying rational knowledge and its validity, there is no way of proving the [reality of] sharī'ah. In such a case, there is no room for the Qur'an and Sunnah through which we could know the principles and branches of religion.

Thirdly, rational thinking has been encouraged and emphasized in the Holy Qur'an. The Qur'an has described those who do not use their minds as the worst of beasts:

( إِنَّ شَرَّ الدَّوَابِّ عِندَ اللّهِ الصُّمُّ الْبُكْمُ الَّذِينَ لاَ يَعْقِلُونَ )

"Indeed the worst of beasts in Allah's sight are the deaf and the dumb who do not apply reason."(2)

( وَيَجْعَلُ الرِّجْسَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ لا يَعْقِلُونَ )

"And He lays defilement on those who do not apply reason."(3)

In many instances, the Holy Qur'an has made use of rational thinking, engaging in intellectual discussion and argumentation. For example, by means of two rational arguments, it has proved the Oneness of God, saying:

( لَوْ كَانَ فِيهِمَا آلِهَةٌ إِلا اللَّهُ لَفَسَدَتَا )

"Had there been gods in them other than Allah, they would surely have fallen apart."(4)

( وَمَا كَانَ مَعَهُ مِنْ إِلَهٍ إِذًا لَذَهَبَ كُلُّ إِلَهٍ بِمَا خَلَقَ وَلَعَلا بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ )

"Neither is there any god besides Him, for then each god would take away what he created, and some of them would surely rise up against others."(5)

In refuting the notion of those who think that God has a son, it is thus stated:

( وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ وَلَدًا سُبْحَانَهُ بَلْ لَهُ مَا

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۱- Nahj al-Balāghah, Sermon ۴۹.

۲- Sūrat al-Anfāl ۸:۲۲.

۳- Sūrat Yūnus ۱۰:۱۰۰.

۴- Sūrat al-Anbiyā' ۲۱:۲۲.

۵- Sūrat al-Mu'minūn ۲۳:۹۱.

فِی السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ کُلٌّ لَهُ قَانِتُونَ  بَدِیعُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ وَإِذَا قَضَی أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا یَقُولُ لَهُ کُنْ فَیَکُونُ )

And they say, 'Allah has taken a son.' Immaculate is He! Rather to Him belongs" whatever is in the heavens and the earth. All are obedient to Him, the Originator of the heavens and the earth; and when He decides on a matter, He just says to it, 'Be!' (and it is."(١)

These two verses speak about two rational proofs in refuting the belief in God having an offspring. One is based on the essence of tawḥīd and God's immunity from any similitude or partner, and the other is based on God's immunity from change (taghyīr) (and quantization (tadrīj).(٢)

Fourthly, in the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (ṣ) and the sayings and conduct of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), the credibility and authority of reason has been emphasized and actually utilized by them. By taking a glance at Nahj al-Balaghah,(٣) Usul al-Kafi,(۴) Al-Ṭawḥid by Shaykh al-Ṣadūq,(۵) Al-Iḥtijāj by Ṭabarsī,(۶) and other Shī'ah sources, one will clearly find out this fact. As we have said earlier, in the school of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) reason has been recognized as the inward proof of God. Imām al-Ṣādiq ('a) has regarded reason as the human being's guide in knowing God as well as in knowing the :principles of what is good and what is evil

فَبِالْعَقلِ عَرَفَ الْعِبادُ خالِقَهُم وَأَنَّهُمْ مَخْلوقونَ، وَأَنَّهُ المُدَبِّرُ لَهُمْ وَأَنَّهُمُ المُدَبَّرونَ... وَعَرَفوا بِهِ الْحَسَنَ مِنَ القَبیحِ...

By means of reason, the servants recognize their Creator"



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.Sūrat al-Baqarah ٢:١١۶-١١٧ -١

See Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī, Al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān, vol. ١١, -٢ .p. ٣۶١

Nahj al-Balāghah (The Peak of Eloquence) is a collection of speeches, sayings and -٣ letters of the Commander of the Faithful, Imām 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib ('a) compiled by Sharīf al-Raḍī Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusayn (d. ۴٠۶ AH/١٠١۶). Its contents concern the three essential topics of God, man and the universe, and include comments on

scientific, literary, social, ethical, and political issues. [Trans.]

۴- Al-Kāfi: more fully, Al-Kāfi fī ’l-Hadīth, one of the most important Shī‘ah collections of hadīth, compiled by Shaykh Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad ibn Ya‘qūb al-Kulaynī (d. ۳۲۹ AH/۹۴۱ CE) and divided into three sections: Uṣūl al-Kāfī, Furū‘ al-Kāfī and Rawḍah al-Kāfī consisting of ۳۴ books, ۳۲۶ sections, and over ۱۶,۰۰۰ ahādīth that can be traced back to the Prophet and his family by an unbroken chain of transmission. [Trans.]

۵- Shaykh aṣ-Ṣadūq: also known as Ibn Babūyah, one of the most important of the early Shī‘ah scholars who died in ۳۸۱ AH/۹۹۱ CE. For his short biography and works, see the introduction of Shaykh aṣ-Ṣadūq, I’tiqādātu ’l-Imāmiyyah: A Shī‘ite Creed, ۳rd Ed., trans. Asaf A. A. Fyzee (Tehran: World Organization for Islamic Services, ۱۹۹۹), pp. ۶-۲۳. [Trans.]

۶- Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib al-Ṭabarsī (d. circa ۶۲۰ AH): a great Shī‘ah scholar, jurisprudent, traditionist (muḥaddith), and historian of the sixth and early seventh century AH. Among his works are Al-Iḥtijāj, Al-Kāfī fī ’l-Fiqh, Tārīkh al-A’immah and Kitāb al-Ṣalāh. [Trans.]

and that they are creatures and that He is their Governor and that they are governed… and they distinguished the good from the evil…”[1]

According to Imām ‘Alī (‘a), one of the goals of the mission of the prophets is “to unveil before them (people) the hidden virtues of wisdom”: [2]

لِيُثيروا لَهُمْ دَفائِنَ العُقولِ

Fifthly, the Holy Qur’an and traditions (aḥādīth) have a set of sublime knowledge which is beyond sensory perception and common understanding and comprehension. For example, God is the Dominant One (al-Ghālib). He is the First and the Last (al-Awwal wa ’l-Ākhir). He is the Inward and the Outward (al-Baṭin wa ’ẓ-Ẓāhir).

He encompasses everything (al-Muḥīṭ). His Unity is not numerical oneness. He is with everything without being parallel with it in time and space. He is outside everything but not in the sense of detachment and separation (infiṣāl). Everything comes from Him and shall return to Him. His Word is identical with His Action, and so on and so forth.

Now, this question is raised: what is the reason behind mentioning these facts in the Book (Qur’an) and the Sunnah? Is it to lay down a set of lessons for reflection, intellection, understanding, and inspiration and to guide the minds while swimming in the boundless ocean of divine knowledge? Or, is it to present issues and problems without solution and beyond comprehension so as to persuade the minds to submission, silence and blind following?!

These pieces of knowledge are not instructions, commands or orders. There is no point in reasoning



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۱- Uṣūl al-Kāfī, vol. ۱, “Kitāb al-‘Aql wa ’l-Jahl,” ḥadīth ۳۵.

۲- Nahj al-Balāghah, Sermon ۱.

out, therefore, that “Our duty is to obey what is commanded and nothing else!” They are a set of theoretical issues. If they are beyond comprehension and understanding, what is the benefit in mentioning them? It is a like a Grade One teacher who teaches a college level subject [such as calculus or statistics] to his pupils and tells them to accept whatever she tells them although they could not comprehend it!

God could be known, therefore, and at the same time, man can know Him through reason and reflection on the signs in the horizon and in himself, although

(۱) his knowledge of the Divine Essence and Attributes is limited and his understanding of the Divine Essence and Attributes (as they are) is beyond the power of the human mind or intellect – “He has not informed (human) wit about the limits of His qualities”(۱) – and

(۲) to follow this path is not that easy and simple as it needs special intellectual agility and efforts.

This is not to suggest, however, that it is possible for everybody to understand all levels of rational and philosophical discussions about all issues related to theology. Definitely, this is not so. And there are many limitations, prerequisites and impediments along the way. The point is that this way is open for the human being, and there have always been people who have been able to examine metaphysical issues pertaining to theology through the correct use of reason and rational thinking.

In conclusion, let us



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۱- [Trans.] Nahj al-Balāghah, Sermon ۴۹.

state once again that the point is not to limit the way of knowing God to the rational means and method, because one can also know God through mystical intuition (shuhūd). And after proving [the genuineness of] revelation (waḥyi), one can also know issues pertaining to the Unseen through revelation. But even these two are based on rational knowledge, and denial of reason and rational knowledge is tantamount to the denial of both intuition and revelation.

### Review Questions

۱. Who are the rationalists? Write their viewpoint about knowing God.

۲. Write the statement of Professor Muṭahharī about knowing God through the intellect.

۳. As far as knowing God through the intellect is concerned, state the pieces of evidence about this from the Holy Qur'an.

۴. Write the view of the intuitionists about knowing God and the objection to it.

۵. Write the view of the sensualists about knowing God and the objection to it.

۶. Write the summary of the sensualists' view about knowing God and the objection to it.

## Lesson ۳: Natural Disposition (Fiṭrah) and Knowing God

### point

One of the ways of knowing God being always given attention by thinkers and scholars and also given importance by the prophets through whom they have guided the people to the true religion and the worship of God is the human being's natural disposition (fiṭrah).

### Definition of Fiṭrah

Fiṭrah is defined in the Qur'an and traditions as "new and unprecedented creation." The originality of the creation of the universe has two dimensions. One is that God

Himself has created the primary components of the universe and brought the universe into

p: ٢٧

existence through their composition, and the other is that God Himself has also .conceived of the design of creation without copying it from anything or anybody

Fiṭrah is a type of intrinsic guidance for the human being in the realm of knowledge and sensory perception. It is identical with instinct (gharīzah) in the sense that each of them is a sort of "intrinsic guidance" (hidāyat-e takwīnī). But their difference lies in the fact that fiṭrah pertains to rational types of guidance while instinct pertains to non-rational types of guidance. Hence, fiṭrah is regarded as one of the salient features of .the human being while instinct is one of the characteristics of [lower] animal life

## The Distinctive Features of Fiṭrah

:Human fiṭrah can be identified with the following salient features

۱. Since it is an integral part of human creation, it is not outside the framework of cause and effect, although external factors have contributed in its growth and ;development

۲. Man has intuitive knowledge of it but it can also be known through acquisitive ;knowledge

۳. It is inseparable with rational perception and knowledge; that is, it is crystallized in ;the realm of rational human life and it is regarded as the criterion for man's humanity

۴. It is the touchstone and standard of human exaltation because it has a sense of ;(sanctity (taqaddus

۵. It is general and universal; and

۶. It is permanent and inalterable.

Some of the abovementioned features can also be found in instinct, such as the first, second, fifth, and sixth features while two features – the third and

.the fourth – are exclusive to fiṭrah

Given these salient features, one can also distinguish fiṭrah from habit (‘ādat), for habit is not innate but rather a product and outcome of external factors. Moreover, it is not universal and permanent.(1)

It must be noted that these salient features can be inferred by analyzing fiṭrah, and thus, they are essential and definite. That is, in view of the definition given to fiṭrah, negation of the said features is tantamount to contradiction. For example, notwithstanding the assumption that an object is square, the identical size of its sides is denied. Notwithstanding the assumption that a substance is water, its being liquid is denied. In the words of the Muslim philosophers, such predicates (maḥmūlāt)(2) are called "predicates about the core" (maḥmūlāt ‘an ṣamīmah) and Emmanuel Kant(3) has called such predicates "analytic propositions."

Therefore, there is no need to cite proofs and evidence to establish the abovementioned features.

### Fiṭrah in the Domain of Knowledge and Sensory Perception

As we have stated, fiṭrah is one of the characteristics of rational human life, and human life has two domains of manifestations, viz. knowledge and feeling. In other words, they are perception (idrāk) and inclination (girāyesh). That is to say that on account of fiṭrah, man perceives the truths and tends to incline to them.

### Intrinsic (fiṭrī) Knowledge

Intrinsic (fiṭrī) knowledge refers to the things which the human reason (‘aql) axiomatically knows and accepts, without need for any learning (ta‘līm) and inculcation (talqīn) and they are known in logic as "rational axioms" (badīhiyyāt-e ‘aqlī), which, in turn, are divided into two, viz. theoretical rational



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1- See Murtaḍā Muṭahharī, Fiṭrah, pp. ٣٢-٣٤, ۶٩-٧٣.

۲ - Maḥmūl: the logical predicate, i.e. the term (or terms) in a proposition which predicates something about the subject (mawḍu‘), e.g. the term "mortal" in the proposition: "Man is mortal." [Trans.]

۳- Immanuel Kant (۱۷۲۴-۱۸۰۴): the German philosopher regarded by many as the most influential thinker of modern times. Describing in the Metaphysics of Ethics (۱۷۹۷) his ethical system which is anchored in a notion that reason is the final authority for morality, actions of any sort, Kant believed, must be undertaken from a sense of duty dictated by reason, and no action performed for expediency or solely in obedience to law or custom can be regarded as moral. [Trans.]

axioms (badīhiyyāt-e ‘aqlī-ye naẓarī) and practical rational axioms (badīhiyyāt-e ‘aqlī ‘amalī):

۱. Theoretical rational axioms, such as the law of non-contradiction, circular argument, the rule that qualities of the same weight are equal, the rule that a whole is bigger than its part, and so forth, and

۲. The rule on the goodness of justice and honesty, and the evil of injustice and telling a lie, and the like.

Ibn Sīnā has defined intrinsic perceptions (idrākāt-e fiṭrī) with two characteristics. First is that they emanate from human nature and not a product of teaching (ta‘līm) and inculcation (talqīn), and the other is that they are definite and undeniable:

“Fiṭrah means that granted that man is suddenly created mature and intelligent and has so far not heard of any belief or view from anyone and has not been able to interact with anyone, he would entertain an idea in his mind and doubt about it. So, if he was able to doubt it, fiṭrah does not testify to it and if he was not able to doubt it, it is the dictate of his fiṭrah.”(۱)

#### Instinctive Inclinations

As we have stated earlier, intrinsic inclinations are rational and have a sense of sanctity or sacredness (qidāsah). This type of inclinations is called “sublime inclinations” in psychology, in contradistinction to “personal inclinations” such as love of oneself, and “social inclinations” such as tribalism and patriotism.

According to psychologists, “sublime inclinations” have four types:

۱. Search for the truth. It is also called sense of curiosity and honesty; that is, man intrinsically

p: ۳۰

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۱- Ibn Sīnā, Al-Najāt, p. ۶۲.

.accepts, searches for the truth and inclines to it

Love of beauty (aesthetics). Man is naturally inclined to goodness and beauty, and .۲ his emotions are stimulated in perceiving whatever is beautiful, and thus bringing particular pleasure to himself. Archeological evidence testifies that aesthetic values .have been in existence since pre-historic times

Love of good or moral inclination. It is one of man's intrinsic and sublime . ۳ inclinations; one of the most important points of his distinction to the animals

Religious feeling. It is an intrinsic inclination to a metaphysical and sublime truth; .۴ according to psychologists, it is one of the primary and permanent elements of the (human soul; it is as fundamental as the sense of beauty, good and right.(۱

#### Fiṭrah and Search for God

As stated earlier, the sense of curiosity and truthfulness is one of the intrinsic inclinations of the human being, and because of this intrinsic guidance, he wants to know the secrets and causes of phenomena. Just as this intrinsic inclination prompts him to search for the cause of each of the phenomena, it also stimulates him to search for the cause of the totality of phenomena in the universe regarded as a single (unit.(۲

#### Fiṭrah and Inclination to God

##### point

The human being's intrinsic inclination to God can be proved in two ways. One is to study one's psyche and the behavioral and verbal reactions of others and thereby to identify such inclination and the other is to refer to the views and opinions of scholars, particularly the psychologists. We shall first deal with the first way and explain

p: ۳۱

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Ḥiss-e Madhhabī Yā Bu'd-e Chahārum-e Rūḥ-e Insānī (Religious Feeling or the - ۱ .Fourth Dimension of the Human Soul), pp. ۱۶-۳۲

٢- In this regard, refer to the first lesson.

it in two presentations, viz. love for absolute perfection and hope for a superior power .in moments of danger

### a. Love for Absolute Perfection

The human being will find out in himself that he loves perfection; nay, he wants perfection in the absolute sense. By referring to the actions and sayings of others, he will also discover the same feeling in others. (It must be noted that we do not talk here about attainment of absolute perfection but rather about love for absolute (.perfection

We hereby state that the existence of such a feeling in the human being is a proof of the reality of absolute perfection, and what is meant by "God" is nothing but Absolute .Perfection and Beauty, and Infinity

The conclusion of these two preliminary points is that man innately loves God, although there might be mistakes in practice by loving what is not really absolutely perfect. For example, an infant's sense of hunger inspires her that there is food or something to eat in the world, but in many instances, she commits a mistake in identifying what can really be eaten but proceeds to putting an insect into her mouth, .for example

The question is, what is the proof that love for the absolute perfection necessitates its ?being real? Is it not possible that this feeling is incorrect and baseless

:Reply: The reality of love for absolute perfection can be proved in two ways

The first way is that instinctive and intrinsic inclinations, without any reality in the outside world, are incompatible with the order governing the

universe because a study on the existing human and animal instincts (gharāyiz) shows that they pay attention and are attached to real things, and if ever there is any .mistake, it is in identifying the manifestations, and not in the essence of the thing

The second way is that the realization of matters whose reality pertains to nothing is impossible without the realization of the muḍāfun 'ilayh (noun in the genitive case) and their adjunct (muta'alliq).(١) For example, knowledge ('ilm) or awareness necessitates object of knowledge (ma'lūm) and to suppose knowledge without its adjunct is something impossible. The will (irādah), therefore, needs a purpose (murād) [for itself to function]. Love (ḥubb) necessitates an object of love (maḥbūb). Affection .demands an object of affection, and so on and so forth

If these stated things potentially (bi'l-quwwah) exist, then their adjuncts (muta'alliqāt) must also exist potentially, and if the stated things actually (bi'l-fi'l) exist, then their adjuncts (muta'alliqāt) must also exist actually. Since our assumption is that inclination to the absolute perfection actually exists, it follows that the Absolute Perfection also .actually exists

#### b. Hope for a Superior Power in Moments of Danger

In moments of danger and crisis in life when the human being loses hope in all natural means and causes, deep inside him he feels that there is a Power over all physical powers and if It wills, It can rescue him. As such, the hope to live gets stronger in him and he strives harder in order to survive. And this in itself is a testimony to the instinctiveness of theism



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The assumption is that it is an "added essence" (dhāt al-iḍāfah). That is, its being - ١ pertaining to nothing is embedded in its essence. In this case, the assumption of its being real without the existence of its adjunct (muta'alliq) is tantamount to contradiction. Adjunct (muta'alliq): an adverb or a phrase that adds meaning to the [.verb in a sentence or part of a sentence. [Trans

deep within the human being. Yet, the amusements of material life make him heedless of the existence of that Superior Power under common conditions. In reality, the amusements of life are like dust to the mirror of fiṭrah and because of which the human being cannot see the face of truth in it. The many crises in life remove all those .dust, thereby making clear the mirror of fiṭrah

:In this regard, Ṣadr al-Mu'allihīn said

The existence of God, as stated, is something innate as testified by the fact that" when the human being is situated in horrible conditions, he would intrinsically repose his trust in God and turn toward the Cause of causes (musabbab al-asbāb) and the One who turns difficulties into ease, although he gives no attention to this intrinsic (inclination of his."(١

:Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī has also said in this regard'

No one – believer or unbeliever – has any doubt that in moments of danger when" there is no hope for any means and way of rescue, the human being turns his attention toward, and seeks the assistance of, a Superior Power which is above all means and is immune from any defect, negligence, oblivion, and the like. Meanwhile, hope and expectation, just like love, hatred, will, aversion, attraction, and the like are qualities that depend on others and they will not be materialized without the .existence of their dependents (muta'alliq) in the outside world

Therefore, the actual hope in one's self for a Powerful Being is a testimony to



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.Ṣadr al-Mu'allihīn, Al-Mabda' wa 'l-Ma'ād, p. ١۶ -١

the actual existence of It. The human fiṭrah can clearly discern the existence of such a Power although in many cases, because of the amusements [in life] he is so overly heedless of Its outward elements and manifestations. Yet, with the emergence of perils and difficulties in life, this veil of heedlessness will be removed and fiṭrah will (play its role of guidance."(١

In numerous verses, the Holy Qur'an has also stated the fact that in times of danger and crisis, the human being seeks refuge in One God. One can point to the following :verse

( فَإِذا رَكِبُوا فِی الْفُلْكِ دَعَوُا اللّهَ مُخْلِصینَ لَهُ الدِّینَ فَلَمّا نَجّاهُمْ إِلَى الْبَرِّ إِذا هُمْ یُشْرِكُونَ )

When they board the ship, they invoke Allah putting exclusive faith in Him, but when" He delivers them to land, behold, they ascribe partners [to Him], being ungrateful for (what We have given them!"(٢

### Reply to Two Objections

:First Objection

Hope for a superior power in moments of danger and lose of hope for natural means do not provide a logical proof for the existence of that superior power because it is possible that the cause of this hope is man's love for life and subsistence. Although he knows for a fact that there is no rescuing power, his love for life generates this imagination in him. Someone who is drowning knows that there is no one who can .rescue him, yet he still shouts and calls for help

:Reply

Like love, affection, will, hatred, and the like, sense of hope is a reality adjunct to something



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Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī, Al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān, vol. ١٢, p. ٢٧٢, -١

.exegesis of Sūrat al-Naḥl, verse ٥٣

٢- ٢٩:٦٥ Sūrat al-‘Ankabūt.

else ("added essence"). If it is realized actually, its adjunct must also exist actually. In the case of the drowning person, even granted that there is no human rescuer out there, this call for help shows that there is really a Rescuer. His shout reflects his inner .feelings on the existence of a Power that can rescue him if It wills so

:Objection ۲

If search for God and belief in Him are intrinsic human inclinations, how comes not all people believe in, and worship God, and not all those who worship God express ?interest on issues pertaining to the task of knowing God

:Reply

The innateness (fiṭriyyah) of a human inclination does not necessarily mean that it is uniformly active in all people and in all conditions, yielding the same result. The role of fiṭrah is in terms of the order of succession of its practical effect within the appropriate limit, and not in being the total cause. For this reason, external conditions and factors have their contribution in its emergence. This point is not limited to the human being's inclination to God. For instance, love of knowledge is one of the intrinsic inclinations of the human being, but it is actually expressed in different ways under different conditions. Sometimes, it is so extreme that it prevails over all physical instincts and inclinations and there are also times when it is very low. Yet, in any case, knowledge is something lovable and desirable, and the human being accepts it deep .inside him

**What Scholars Say**

That faith

in God stems from man’s inner being is acceptable to many scholars and some of them have even regarded the heart as the best locus for knowing God. We have stated earlier that religious feeling is one of the primordial dimensions of the human :soul. Here, we shall quote the statements of some scholars

Blaise Pascal (۱۶۲۳-۱۶۶۲), a renowned French [physicist, religious philosopher and] .۱ mathematician, has said, “The heart, and not the intellect, bears witness to the existence of God, and faith is attained through this way. The heart has proofs which (are inaccessible to the intellect.”(۱

:Nicolas Malebranche (۱۶۳۸-۱۷۱۵), a French philosopher, says .۲

Although the human soul is connected to the body, its real and original link is to God.“ But since the human being becomes sinful, his attention is drawn to the body and his ...link to the Origin becomes weaker. He must strive hard to strengthen that link

The human soul cannot perceive anything except that which is connected and linked“ to it and since it has no real connection to the body and its link is to God, it can only ...perceive the existence of God

Given this, it becomes clear that the Essence of God needs no proof. His existence is“ axiomatic and the human knowledge of His Being is essential, and the human soul can (directly perceive God without any intermediary.”(۲

William James (۱۸۴۲-۱۹۱۰), the famous American psychologist, has made an . ۳ extensive study of religion and faith in God through psychology and written a book entitled The



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Sayr-e Ḥikmat dar Urūpā (The Trend of Wisdom in Europe), vol. ۲, p. ۱۸; Falsafeh wa -۱ .Imān-e Masīḥī (Philosophy and Christian Faith), p. ۵۴

.Sayr-e Ḥikmat dar Ūrupā, vol. ۲, pp. ۲۲-۲۳ -۲

Varieties of Religious Experience in this regard. Some parts of the said book have been translated into Persian under the title Dīn wa Rawān (Religion and Psyche).(۱) He :says

The primordial source of religious concepts emanates from the beliefs of the heart,“ and then philosophy and intellectual arguments put those concepts in a system or formula. Disposition and the heart come forward and the intellect follows suit, guiding (it.”(۲

:He also says

We feel that we have a defect and flaw in our being which is the source of our“ restlessness, and we also feel that whenever we establish connection with a power superior to us, we can rescue ourselves from this restlessness and inquietude. This is already enough for the human being to resort to a higher truth. He will thus realize that within him there is something beyond these restlessness and inquietude and that he is linked to a higher truth which is not separated from him and which can help him. And when his being of descent and lower position is in a whirlpool and deep waters, it ((higher truth) will become his refuge and ark of salvation.(۳

Christoph Meiners (۱۷۴۷-۱۸۱۰), a German researcher who has written valuable works .۴ of criticism on the general history of religions, is one of the pioneering modern scholars who confirmed that there is no community or nation without religion and that (religion has emanated from the human being's innermost self.(۴

Although Sigmund Freud(۵) regards religion as a product of human imagination, he .۵ has



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Six out of ۲۰ chapters of the book have been translated into Persian. See William -۱ James, Dīn wa Rawān (Religion and Psyche), trans. Mahdī Qā'inī (Tehran: Intishārāt [.wa Āmūzesh-e Inqilābī Islāmī, ۱۳۷۲ AHS). [Trans

.Dīn wa Rawān, trans. Mahdī Qā'inī, p. ۵۷ -۲

.Ibid., p. ۱۲۲ -۳

.Dīnpazhūhishī (Religious Studies), vol. ۱, trans. Bahā' al-Dīn Khurramshāhī, p. ۱۲۲ -۴

Sigmund Freud (۱۸۵۶-۱۹۴۰): the founder of psychoanalysis who founded the - ۵ International Psychoanalytical Association in ۱۹۱۰ and whose view on psychoanalysis was reached through his study of the effect of hypnosis on hysteria. Among his numerous and well-known works are The Interpretations of Dreams, The Psychopathology of Everyday Life, Introductory Lectures in Psychoanalysis, Humor and Its Relation to the Unconscious, The Ego and the Id, The Problem of Anxiety, and [.The Future of an Illusion. [Trans

:a somehow moderate stance on intrinsic knowledge. For example, he has then said

It cannot be denied that some persons feel something from within which cannot be“ explained well. This subjective assumption is a perpetual feeling which is reflected in the great mystics as well as in Indian religious thinking. It is possible that it constitutes the source or essence of religious feelings which are the manifestations of various ”.religions

He has doubt on this subject and acknowledges that by his psychoanalysis, he has not been able to find any trace of such feelings in himself, but he adds that this fact does (not allow him to deny the existence of the said feeling in others.(۱

۶. Max Muller(۲) says, “Feelings of infinity give rise to the birth of belief and religion.”

۷. Jean-Jacques Rousseau(۳) said, “Common sense is the best way to prove the existence of God.”

۸. Albert Einstein(۴) said, “My religion consists of inadequate and insignificant veneration of a Superior Spirit.” He also said, “The most beautiful experience is to experience secrets and mysteries – the same experience that has brought religion (religiosity) into existence... the same feeling which is the quintessence of real (religiosity.”(۵

#### Fiṭrah and Religion from the Perspective of Revelation

The innateness of religion has been categorically put forth in the Qur’an and traditions. The most explicit verse in this regard is verse ۳۰ of Sūrat al-Rūm which has :(become known as the Verse of Human Nature (āyat al- fiṭrah

( فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَکَ لِلدِّینِ حَنِیفًا فِطْرَهَ اللَّهِ الَّتِی فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَیْهَا لاَ تَبْدِیلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ذَلِکَ الدِّینُ الْقَیِّمُ



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۱- Kūdak az Naẓar-e Wirāthat wa Tabiyat (The Child in Terms of Nature and Nurture), vol. ۱, p. ۳۰۸, quoting Andīshehhā-ye Freud (Freudian Thoughts), p. ۸۹.

۲ - Friedrich Max Müller (۱۸۲۳-۱۹۰۰), more regularly known as Max Müller: a German philologist and Orientalist, and one of the founders of the western academic field of Indian studies and the discipline of comparative religion. [Trans.]

۳ - Jean-Jacques Rousseau (۱۷۱۲-۷۸): Swiss-born French writer, philosopher, and political theorist. Greatly influenced by Denis Diderot, Rousseau first gained fame from his essay Discourse on the Sciences and the Arts (۱۷۵۰), an attack on the arts as a source for the increased wealth of the rich and an instrument of propaganda. In his Discourse on Inequality (۱۷۵۵), he professed the equality and goodness of 'natural man' and asserted that the golden age of humanity occurred before the formation of society, which bred competition and the corrupting influences of property, commerce, science, and agriculture. The Social Contract (۱۷۶۲), influential during the French Revolution, claimed that when human beings formed a social contract to live in society, they delegated authority to a government; however, they retained sovereignty and the power to withdraw that authority when necessary. [Trans.]

۴- Albert Einstein (۱۸۷۹-۱۹۵۵): German, Swiss and American mathematician and atomic physicist who stimulated a revolution in physics by discovering the theory of general relativity and for which he received the Nobel Prize in physics in ۱۹۲۱ and is often regarded as the father of modern physics. [Trans.]

۵ - Kūdak az Naẓar-e Wirāthat wa Tabiyat, vol. ۱, p. ۶۹, quoting Irtibāt-e Insān wa Jahān (The Relationship of Man and the World), vol. ۳, p. ۱۷۵.

وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ ٱلنَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ )

So set your heart on the religion as a people of pure faith, the origination of Allah“ according to which He originated mankind. There is no altering Allah’s creation; that is (the upright religion, but most people do not know.”(1)

:The Holy Prophet (ṣ) is reported to have said

كُلُّ مَوْلودٍ يولَدُ عَلَى الفِطْرَهِ.

”.Everyone begotten is born in the state of fiṭrah“

According to Imām al-Ṣādiq (‘a), this means that the gnosis (ma‘rifah) that God is the (Creator of man and the universe is ingrained in every human being.(2)

Imām ‘Alī (‘a) has regarded “the renewal of the intrinsic covenant between God and :(mankind” as one of the goals of the prophets’ bi‘thah (mission

لِيَسْتَأْدوهُمْ ميثاقَ فِطْرَتِهِ XC

The Imām (‘a) has also said that al-tawḥīd which is called “the word of purity” (kalimat al-ikhlāṣ) is rooted in man’s being.(3) And there are many traditions (aḥādīth) regarding the intrinsic nature of religion and to quote them is beyond the scope of the .discussion

It is appropriate for us to end this discourse with some couplets from Naẓīrī :Nayshābūrī

غیر من در پس این پرده سخنسازی هست

راز در دل نتوان داشت که غمّازی هست

بلبلان! گل ز گلستان به شبستان آرید

که در این کنج قفس زمزمه پردازی هست

تو مپندار که این قصّه به خود میگویم

گوش نزدیک لبم آر که آوازی هست

**Review Questions**

.State the definition of fiṭrah

.Write down the salient features of human fiṭrah

.Explain the theoretical rational axioms and practical rational axioms

.State what Ibn Sīnā said about the salient features of fiṭrah

Write down the types of sublime



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۱- Trans.] Sūrat al-Rūm ۳۰:۳۰.]

۲- Tafsīr Burhān, vol. ۳, p. ۲۶۱.

۳- Nahj al-Balāghah, Sermon ۱۱۰.

.inclinations according to the psychologists

.Explain briefly the first way of the human being's inclination to God

.Write down Ṣadr al-Muta'allihīn's proof of the intrinsic nature of inclination to God

.State 'Allāmah al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī's proof on the intrinsic nature of inclination to God

.Write down the objection to the intrinsic nature of theism and the reply to it

.(Explain the intrinsic nature of religion in the Qur'an and traditions (aḥādīth

## Lesson ۴: Order in the Universe and Knowing God

### point

One of the rational – and at the same time, simple and universal – ways of knowing God is to reflect on the order or design in the creation. This way has been given much importance in the Qur'an and the Sunnah, as this has also been continuously the focus of attention of the theologians (mutakallimūn), and in the contemporary period, it has (also acquired more significance.(۱

### The Definition and Types of Order

Naẓm (order or design) is a kind of relationship between two or more things. In naẓm, a relationship or interdependence is established among the parts of a phenomenon or among the members of an entity. As such, naẓm is inseparable with the principle of causation ('illiyyah). That is, whenever there is naẓm, the cause-and-effect .relationship governs

The cause-and-effect relationship that exists in naẓm is sometimes agent-based and outcome-based at other times. In the first case, the naẓm is called "cause-and-effect order" (naẓm-e 'illī wa ma'lūlī) or "agent-based cause" (illat-e fā'ilī) [where the emphasis is on the agent] while in the second case, the naẓm is called "outcome .(order" (naẓm-e ghā'ī) or "outcome-based cause" ('illat-e ghā'ī

The relationship between the

۱ - The argument of design has a particular history and development in Christian theology. For further information in this regard, see the book God in Philosophy or Science and Religion (۱۹۶۸) by Ian Graeme Barbour (۱۹۲۳- ), a prominent American scholar on the relationship between science and religion whose ۱۹۸۹-۹۱ Gifford Lectures yielded the widely recognized texts, Religion in an Age of Science (۱۹۹۰) and Ethics in an Age of Technology (۱۹۹۳).

clouds, wind, and rain, the fineness of air, and the order that exists between them are examples of the first case while the relationship between the cornea, retina, iris and other parts of the eye which are essential for vision is an example of the second case. That is, the organic relationship or order of these parts in a given condition brings about vision or the power of sight. And seeing is the outcome (ghāyah) of this special .relationship

There is another type of naẓm which is called naẓm-e istiḥsānī (formal or structural order). This order is caused by a particular composition of the components of a phenomenon or an aggregate and since aesthetic value influences the human being and provides him with a pleasant portrait, it is called formal or approbational .(istiḥsānī) order

The difference between the abovementioned types of order is that what is taken into account in the agent-based order (naẓm-e fā'ilī) is that every effect or happening depends on a cause which precedes it and brings it into existence. Whether that .cause has self-awareness and willpower or not is inconsequential in the said order

In the outcome-based order (naẓm-e ghā'ī), however, not only the existence of the cause or causes of a phenomenon but also the element of self-awareness and willpower are taken into consideration, because among the hundreds or thousands of probable relations among the components of a phenomenon, only one of them can lead to a certain outcome determined for it. Therefore, the agent-based cause of

.such order must be self-conscious and has willpower

In the formal or structural order (naẓm-e istiḥsānī), meanwhile, the focus is only the external or structural elegance of a phenomenon irrespective of it having a cause or .none, and if it is has, whether it is self-conscious and goal-oriented, or not

**The Order of Outcome and the Argument of Design**

From what has been said, it became clear that the existing order or design in the Argument of Design is the Order of Outcome (naẓm-e ghā'ī), because only the existence of such order which can lead man to the existence of the All-wise and All-powerful Creator, and not the other two types of order (agent-based and structural orders), because in these two types of order, as stated, the elements of self-.consciousness and willpower are not requisites

The order of outcome, however, necessitates consciousness and willpower. The fact that out of thousands of probable relationships, only one relationship can lead to a specific outcome or goal, and such an outcome or goal is materialized, leaves no room for any doubt that the existing relationship or order has a wise, powerful and .independent Agent

:In this regard, Professor Muṭahharī (r)(۱) has said, thus

The meaning of order applied in knowing God is the order caused by an Ultimate" Cause and not the order attributable to an agent-based cause. The order attributable to an agent-based cause is nothing but to say that every effect or consequence necessitates a cause or agent. Naturally, if it is also the effect of another cause and the said cause is also



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۱- The abbreviation, "r" stands for the Arabic invocative phrase, raḥmatullāh 'alayhi, raḥmatullāh 'alayhā, or raḥmatullāh 'alayhim (may peace be upon him/her/them), [.which is mentioned after the names of pious people. [Trans

the effect of yet another cause – and so on and so forth – inevitably, there exists an order among them – a chain-like order. This order cannot be a proof of the existence .of God

But the order caused by an Ultimate Cause means that the effect has a condition or state which bespeaks of the existence of freewill in the cause. That is, it has a condition or state which can bring about the effect into existence in other forms but it has brought it into existence in a specific form for a particular purpose it has. So, in the case of the Cause, it must have consciousness, perception and willpower so as to identify the objective and to discern the function of a given structure or condition for the said objective, and finally, to bring the said effect into existence for the said .objective

The principle of the ultimate cause is only possible when the cause that brings the effect into existence has consciousness, perception and willpower, or if the agent itself has no consciousness, perception and willpower, it is under the control and supervision of a Superior Agent that manages it and leads it toward the objective intended for it. The order which exists in the universe and is the proof of the existence (of God is exactly this order."(۱

### !It is Design and Not Accident

One cannot deny the existence of order or design in the universe. All branches of .science testify to the existence of this order or design in the universe



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.Murtaḍā Muṭahharī, Tawḥīd, pp. ۷۹-۸۰ -۱

Scientists have different definitions of “the scientific method” but most of them accept that science is meant to discover the universal rules and laws of nature. Obviously, the hierarchy of laws discovered earlier by sciences ascertains the existence of these laws. Now, our freedom to conduct research allows us to ask why these laws exist. That is, how can we explain the existence of this order, hierarchy and usefulness of the laws of nature? In this regard, there are only two possibilities:

۱. This order or design is the product of expansion and continuity of the universe which incidentally came into existence at the beginning, and

۲. The order or system in nature is the product of an accurate design which has created it.

The first assumption is unbelievable. Therefore, the second assumption must be accepted and the existence of a powerful and all-wise Creator be acknowledged.(۱)

The primary components of living bodies are three elements, viz. hydrogen, oxygen and carbon, and some amount of nitrogen and very small quantities of other elements that are combined with them. In simple and small organisms, millions of atoms of such elements exist and are combined together in specific proportions and forms.

In terms of probability, the chance or accident of having a given outcome is so insignificant and as good as zero. Now, let us consider the most complex of organisms, i.e. the human being, who wants to discover or manipulate the laws of nature. Is it possible for this being to have accidentally come into



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۱- John Kelur Munisma (?), Ithbāt-e Wujūd-e Khudā (Proving the Existence of God), trans. Aḥmad Ārām, pp. ۲۲۴-۲۲۶, with a slight terminological modification.

(existence through a spontaneous combination of those elements?!(۱

## Imām al–Ṣādiq (ʻa) and the Proof of Order

As part of his detailed discourse with Mufaḍḍal ibn ʻUmar about the existence of God and its proofs, Imam al-Ṣādiq (ʻa) has mentioned the order and perfection in the universe, saying thus:

"The structure of the universe is the foremost directive and argument for the existence of Almighty Allah – how the parts thereof have been set together and have been possessed of elegant workmanship and design. An appropriate mood of contemplation with reason focused on individual parts will disclose that this universe is comparable to a house furnished with all articles necessary for human beings. The sky is like a canopy; the earth is spread like a carpet, while the stars set in stratum upon stratum, appear as lamps alight in their places. The gems are treasured as if the house has lots of collections [of beautiful things]. Besides these, everything is readily available to meet individual needs.

Man, in this world, is like the masterful owner of the house, having in his possession everything therein. And there exist the different plant species available for meeting individual needs... Different species of animals have been allotted functions for particular exigencies and interest... This order and arrangement is a clear proof that the universe has been designed and created on the basis of decree, wisdom, order, and harmony."(۲)

## Review Questions

۱. Write down the definition of order and its types.

۲. Explain the intended order in the argument of design.

۳. How do we prove that the existing order in

۱- Ibid., pp. ۱۷۹-۱۸۰.

۲- Allāmah Majlisī, Biḥār al-Anwār, vol. ۳, p. ۶۲۴.

?the universe is a design and not an accident

.Write down Imām al-Ṣādiq's (ʻa) discourse about the argument of design .۴

## Lesson ۵: Assessment of Hume's Objections to the Argument of Design

**point**

David Hume (۱۷۱۱-۱۷۷۶) of Scotland was one of the empiricist and skeptic philosophers of the West. He opposed many metaphysical foundations such that he had also disputed the proofs of the existence of God. In view of the fact that during his time the most popular proof ever presented for the existence of God in the Western world was the argument of design or teleological argument, he had also posed a serious .challenge to it, raising some objections to it

Many Western theologians and philosophers have considered his objections justifiable, thus treating the argument of design untenable. In their philosophical and theological discourses, the Muslim theologians have also paid attention to Hume's misgivings with the argument of design, thereby replying to each of them. In this .lesson, we shall examine Hume's objections to the argument of design

### First Objection

**point**

The argument of design is founded on comparison and similitude. That is, the phenomena in the universe are likened to human artifacts such as a house or a machine. If we see a house, we immediately conclude with utmost certainty about the existence of an intelligent, powerful and astute architect. By witnessing the existing order in the world's phenomena, we will also realize the existence of a wise and powerful creator, but this comparison can be disputed, for if ever we conclude about the existence of its builder by merely seeing a

(house, it is because we have experienced it before.(1)

So is the case with other human artifacts. But we have observed such an experience regarding the phenomena of the world with a particular order and arrangement, and we have never experienced its emergence by means of a wise and intelligent creator, in that we would also regard the existing world and the order governing it as a product of a wise and intelligent creator on the basis of previous experiences.

**Reply**

The argument of design is not an empirical proof. A proof is empirical when the middle limit (major syllogism) of a ruling or proposition is empirical, but the middle limit in the argument of design is a rational ruling or case, as stated in the previous lesson.

Rationally, ultimate order necessitates consciousness and willpower. If ever there is ultimate order in the world of nature, its rational interpretation is not possible without the acceptance of a wise, powerful and independent creator. In the exposition of the argument of design, if ever the method of comparison is used and human artifacts (house, machine and the like) are cited as examples, the intention is not to make similitudes and comparisons as the foundation of the argument of design, but rather to cite examples from a rational and axiomatic perspective.

In other words, the human side and empiricalness of human artifacts are not exclusive to the argument of design. The criterion and focus of this proof is the rational outcome of the ultimate order and



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۱- If we see a house, we conclude with all certainty that it has an architect or builder, for it is exactly the same thing we have experienced and caused by a particular factor, but we cannot certainly confirm that the universe has such a similarity to a house such that we can deduce a similar cause with the same certainty and conviction. This lack of similarity is so clear that what can be claimed at most is a guess, conjecture or hypothesis regarding a similar cause. Richard H. Popkin and Avrum Stroll, Kulliyyāt-e

.Falsafeh (General Philosophy), trans. Dr. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Mujtabawī, p. ٢١٢

the interference and knowledge and willpower. The ultimate order may be a human artifact or a natural phenomenon. The manner of its emergence may be witnessed and experienced by the senses, or not. Whenever the ultimate order is the criterion for judging itself, comparing the natural order to the human order does not undermine the argument; in fact, this even strengthens the argument because the .natural order is a manifestation of the powers and perfections of the ultimate order

As a result, the rule (dependence of the order on knowledge and willpower) will become more decisive and clearer. This method of argumentation is that which is called "the analogy of precedence" and it means that a rule applies to an individual and lower manifestations of an entity, it will also be applied to the individual and higher manifestations by precedence. If annoying the parents by utterance of the word "Fie"(۱) and the like were faulty, annoying them by abusive language and beating by precedence shall also be faulty. In the words of Claude M. Hazwey (?), an electronic machine designer, "If a design is necessary for a calculator, how is it possible for the human body – given all its physical, chemical and biological (peculiarities – to be needless of a design?!"(۲

## Second Objection

### point

Perhaps, it can be accepted that through the argument of design, a supermanager of the universe can be proved, but in this way we will never be able to prove the existence of a creator as described in



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Fie" is a word used to express mild disgust, disapprobation, annoyance, etc." -۱ [.[Trans

.Ithbāt-e Wujūd-e Khudā (Proving the Existence of God), pp. ۱۶۶-۱۷۰ -۲

the heavenly religions; that is, a God that has no defect at all in His attributes of glory and beauty.

From a particular effect, we can only infer a cause which is capable of bringing the said effect into existence. From a limited and finite universe, therefore, we can never arrive at a limitless and infinite creator.(1)

**Reply**

Every proof or argument has an intended purpose, and the argument of design is intended for nothing but to refute the materialists' view and prove that the world of nature is an effect and is created, and has come into being according to a conscious and wise design and plan. But as to whether the Creator of the universe is finite or infinite in terms of existential perfections, whether He is indivisible or composite, whether He has essence or not, whether His Attributes are identical with His Essence or extraneous to it, and the like are beyond the scope of the argument of design.

[As Professor Muṭahharī says,]

"The value of the argument of design is solely limited to the extent of elevating us to the frontiers of the supranatural. This argument only proves that nature has something beyond itself to which it is subject and that Beyond is conscious of Itself and Its acts. As to whether this transcendent is necessary or contingent, eternal or emergent (ḥādith), one or multiple, finite or infinite, omniscient and omnipotent or not, this lies outside the limits of this argument. These are issues which wholly and solely belong to the



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۱- John Hick, Falsafeh-ye Dīn (Philosophy of Religion), trans. Bahrām Rād, p. ۶۴.

domain of metaphysics, and metaphysics proves them with the help of other arguments."(1)

### Third Objection

#### point

From the order and stability of the world of nature, one cannot conclude about the perfection of knowledge and wisdom of its creator because it is possible that the present order might have come into being after a series of trial and error "acts" by its creator for a long period of time. If we see a ship, initially we conclude about the intelligence and excellence of its builder, but after knowing that he copied its design from others and that the said design has undergone a series of trial and error designings for the past centuries, our amazement for the ship's builder will soon vanish.(2)

#### Reply

The said objection – as in the case of the previous one – stems from a mistaken understanding of the function of the argument of design. Once we accept that the argument of design indicates the world of nature's connection to the supranatural world and testify to the involvement of knowledge and willpower in the emergence of the order of nature, we have confirmed the correctness of the argument of design. Whether the Creator of the universe has acquired His perfections or essentially possesses them is beyond the scope or function of the argument of design and it must be examined through other ways.

### Fourth Objection

#### point

The bedrock of the argument of design is that the similarity of the effects is a proof of the similarity of the causes, and since the human effects

۱- Ilal-e Girāyesh be Māddīgarī (Causes of Inclination to Materialism), p. ۱۵۴.

۲- Kulliyyāt-e Falsafeh (General Philosophy), p. ۲۱۷.

imply intelligent and independent agents, natural effects which in terms of order have also similarity with human effects are indicative of an agent or agents that are similar .to human agents

The outcome of this argument is proving the creator of the universal that is similar to human agents. Now, if one considers God to be free from any sort of similarity or comparison, he cannot accept the conclusion of the argument of design. The argument of design, therefore, is a rational argument and not an all-encompassing (one.(١

### Reply

First of all, the argument of design is not anchored in similitude and comparison. Secondly, comparing or likening two things to each other does not imply their similarity in all aspects. In fact, only the common feature of the two things being compared is the criterion or standard [for comparison]. For instance, the human being's comparison to the lion is from the perspective of bravery and not in other .aspects of the lion

Therefore, if, by comparing the natural effects to the human effects, the universe's need for an intelligent and independent Creator is inferred, what is intended is only the aspect of intelligence and willpower, and not other human characteristics and traits. Even the level of the human being's intelligence and willpower is not the point, but only the essence of intelligence and willpower. In this case, the argument of design has no conflict at all with the Creator of the universe being free from any .similitude or comparison

## Fifth Objection

### point

,The world of nature

.Ibid., pp. ٢١٧-٢١٨ -١

more than being similar to a ship, house or any other human artifact, is more similar to a living being such as an animal or a plant. Therefore, instead of supposing an external cause or origin of the universe, we can consider an internal cause or origin of it, as in the case of the origin of animal or plant life. In this case, the argument of .design cannot prove [the actuality or the reality of] a metaphysical existence

I confirm that the world has other parts which have closer similarity to a house." These parts refer to the animals and plants. It is clear that the universe is more similar to an animal or a plant than to a watch or a sewing machine. Therefore, most probably its cause is similar to the primary cause; hence, we can infer that the cause (of the universe is similar or comparable to the animal birth or plant growth."(١

**Reply**

Firstly, comparing the world of nature to the animal and plant is logically problematic, because both animal and plant are an integral part of the world of nature. Now, we must either compare the entire universe to its part, a part of the universe to another similar part, or a part of the universe to itself. None of the stated propositions is logically acceptable, but comparing the universe to human artifacts does not have .such things to be avoided

Secondly, for us to regard the system of the universe as a dynamic and self-evolving system



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.Ibid., p. ۲۱۸ -۱

and not a mechanical system) neither contradicts the theistic belief on the) relationship between God and the universe, nor provides the rational interpretation to the system of the universe. This is so because concomitance is established between the ultimate order and the involvement of knowledge and willpower in the emergence .and regulation of that order

If such knowledge and willpower cannot be found within the universe, as the animals and plants do not have such traits, then we must believe in a metaphysical, intelligent and independent Origin of the universe, and this is exactly the conclusion which the .argument of design is supposed to prove

## Sixth Objection

### point

There are happenings in the world of nature which are unfavorable to other creatures. These happenings are the same natural disasters such as earthquakes and typhoons. Given the existence of undesirable phenomena, how can one consider the ?design of the universe as originating from a sound and good-intentioned Intellect

When one studies nature – given all its unwanted descriptions, i.e. typhoons," earthquakes and the conflict of one component of nature with another component – (can it be concluded that the planning is made by sound and good intellect?"(۱

### Reply

Firstly, proving all the Divine Attributes of Perfection is beyond the ambit of the .argument of design, and they must be proved through other ways

The existence of natural disasters is in no way incompatible with the Divine Attributes of Perfection, with the Divine Unity, with the Divine justice and wisdom, and with the .other Divine Attributes of Beauty and Glory



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.Ibid., p. ۲۲۴ -۱

.This subject will be treated in detail in the future discussion

### Review Questions

.State and assess David Hume's first objection to the argument of design .١

.Write down Hume's second objection along with its refutation .٢

.Write down Hume's third objection along with its refutation .٣

.Write down Hume's fourth objection along with its refutation .۴

.Write down Hume's fifth objection along with its refutation .۵

.Write down and assess Hume's sixth objection to the argument of design .۶

## Lesson ۶: The Argument of Contingency

### point

In Islamic theology, the argument of contingency (ḥudūth) is of special importance in that it is called the "special way" of the theologians. The argument of contingency has been described in various ways in the books of scholastic theology,(١) and explicitly (discussed in traditions (aḥādīth).(٢

:This argument consists of two premises and a conclusion

.(Premise ١: The universe is contingent (ḥādith

.Premise ٢: Anything contingent is in need of a Maker

.Conclusion: The universe is in need of a Maker

The second premise of this argument is rational and axiomatic, and those who deny the existence of God also accept it as it is a corollary of the principle of causation. And :the proof of its first premise is as follows

.The universe is changeable and alterable .١

.Anything which is changeable and alterable is contingent .۲

.Therefore, the universe is contingent

The second premise of this reasoning is also axiomatic and its being so can be known by reflecting upon the reality of change, for 'contingency' (ḥudūth) means coming into existence after being non-existent; furthermore, anything which is changeable and alterable has no permanence and



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In this regard, see Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, Al-Maṭālib al-'Āliyah, vol. ۱, pp. ۲۰۰-۲۳۲; - ۱ Muḥaqqiq al-Ṭūsī, Qawā'id al-'Aqā'id, pp. ۳۹-۴۵; Sayyid Sharīf Gurgānī, Sharḥ al-Mawāqif, vol. ۸, pp. ۳-۴.

.(In this regard, see Al-Ilāhiyyāt fī Madrasat Ahl al-Bayt ('a -۲

stability, and any state of it is preceded by non-existence, and since this peculiarity is universal, contingency is also universal and all-encompassing.

The first premise of this argument can be attained through sensory observation, because both outward observation and scientific discovery testify to the motion (ḥarikah) and evolution in the universe, as also confirmed by philosophical argument.(١)

In asserting the argument of contingency, 'Allāmah al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī has said:

"Basic observation proves, as can also be found out through scientific curiosity, that the components of the universe have existential connection to one another, and this connection or interrelatedness is not only true to a particular set of components of the universe; in fact, wherever we focus our attention and examine thoroughly, we will discover better the root of this relationship."(٢)

In its own existence, the universe is changeable and alterable; that is, it comes into existence after being non-existent, for once we assess the happenings in the universe in whatever way, we will finally arrive at the universal motion (positional-spatial motion or substantial motion). Motion is existence after non-existence and being mixed with non-being, and as the law of cause and effect demands, any contingent being needs a cause in order to exist.

**Objection**

**point**

It is true that matter (māddah) is in constant motion and change, and motion and change, in turn, necessitate renewal (tajaddud) and contingency, but the same concomitance makes renewal and contingency perpetual and permanent for matter. That is, matter's nature of being alterable and in constant motion shall be perpetual and permanent

١- It refers to the trans-substantial motion argument initiated and proved by Ṣadr al-Muta’allihīn. See Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī and His Transcendent Theosophy: Background, Life and Works (Tehran: Institute of Humanities and Cultural Studies, ١٩٩٧), pp. ٨٥-٩٧. [Trans.]

٢- Uṣūl-e Falsafeh wa Rawish-e Realism, vol. ٥, pp. ٩١-٩٣.

.and anything which is perpetual and permanent is not in need of any cause

**Reply**

Motion and change are characteristics of matter, and matter is qualified (mawṣūf) as 'object in motion'. As such, in relation to motion matter serves as recipient or object. For this reason, it makes no difference whether motion can be distinguished from matter or not, and as reason dictates and experience testifies to the emergence of a phenomenon, the existence of the recipient is not sufficient because the existence of the agent is also necessary. It is thus impossible for the mover (muḥarrak) to be identical with the moved (mutaḥarrik) object. As the law of causation dictates, therefore, motion is in need of a cause other than than its recipient matter, whether (the motion is essentially inseparable to the matter or separable to it.(۱

This discourse does not also contradict the law of inertia in physics because the substance of the said law is that in preserving the motion it has, a physical body is in need of an external factor and it is in need of the external factor only in terms of changing the position or speed of the motion. And the substance of the rational principle is that the contingency of the motion necessitates an external cause although it is possible that the said cause considers the motion essential and inseparable to the body such that for the continuity of the motion, it may not be in .need of an external cause

Given this, the incorrectness of

p: ۵۷

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۱ - For further information in this regard, see the essay about cause and effect in .volume ۳ of Uṣūl-e Falsafeh wa Rawish-e Realism

the assumption of the perpetual and moving matter in interpreting the emergence of the phenomena in the world of nature becomes clear, because the sole perpetuity of their existence is not sufficient to explain their motion. Motion needs not only a recipient (mutaḥarrik or the moving object) but also an agent (mutaḥarrak or mover). :In this regard, 'Allāmah al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī has said

Matter which can only possibly have components, forms and properties and nothing" else cannot create their activity, just like cotton which has the capacity to become clothes. This capability alone cannot make it become clothes and the cotton cannot be worn; rather, other factors such as spinning, weaving and sewing machines must get involved... Regarding influence (ta'thīr), the effector (mu'aththar) must create the effect (athar) and regarding the state of being impressed (ta'aththur), the impressed one (muta'aththar) must be devoid of effect, and of course, lackness (wijdān) cannot be created, and for this reason, matter which is the bearer of possibility and potentiality of a thing cannot by itself have the capability of the said thing which it .does not have

It is true that the actualities which matter bring into existence come into existence" through analysis and synthesis and the emergence of suitable conditions, but it must be seen whether or not only the possibility of analysis and synthesis in matter can bring the actuality of analysis and synthesis into existence, and whether or not the possibility of conditions is identical with the actuality of the conditions."(۱)

## The Second Principle of Thermodynamics and the Universe's Contingency

The second principle



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۱- Uṣūl-e Falsafeh wa Rawish-e Realism, vol. ۵, pp. ۱۷-۱۸.

of thermodynamics which is a law in physics states the fact that if two bodies – warm and cold – are beside each other, the heat of the first body will transfer to the second body and this transfer of heat will continue until an equilibrium of heat between the two bodies is attained and it is not possible for the contrary to spontaneously happen. This process is also called “entropy or tendency to equilibrium”; that is, if we leave the bodies by themselves, they will incline to equilibrium. Mechanical and heat equilibrium .is the natural state of bodies

Sometimes this law is also called “tendency to disorder” and the reason for this is that the state of disorder of the energy molecules is their most improbable state, and their state of disorder is their most probable state. For example, for all the air molecules of a room where we are situated to be located in a particular corner is rationally possible but it is so improbable. On the other hand, their being dispersed in the different parts .of the room is so probable and possible

Therefore, the dispersion of energy and its synthesis is more probable and more natural than its concentration in one location. For this reason, the tendency to attain equilibrium (natural state) is equal to the tendency to end up with disorder in the (abovementioned meaning.(١)

Of course, it must be noted that the state of equilibrium does not mean internal stability. Inside every system, there



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A. Kitaikarudiski and L. Landau (?), Fīzīk Barāye Hameh (Physics for All), trans. - ١ .Muḥammad Yāsīn, pp. ۴۰۴-۴۰۹

is a strong heat motion. Every physical body at every moment, therefore, is subject to transformation. That is, the mutual formation of its molecules differs from moment to moment.(١)

Frank Allen,(٢) a biological physics professor, says:

"The second law of thermodynamics has proved that the universe is constantly moving toward the state in which all bodies reach an equally low degree of heat and there will be no more consumable energy. In that state, life will no longer be possible. If the universe had no beginning and has always existed ever since, it must have come into existence from such state of inactivity and stagnation."(٣)

## Bertrand Russell's Objection

### point

Although Bertrand Russell(۴) accepts the argument of the said law of physics on the contingency of the universe, he regards as incorrect to cite it as proof of the existence of God. [He says]:

"Can we draw a conclusion here that the universe has been created by a creator – whereas by resorting to the laws derived from the method of drawing acceptable scientific conclusion, the answer is definitely negative? There is no existing proof that the universe has not come into existence spontaneously, except that this matter seems strange. In nature, however, there is no existing law which shows that the things which seem strange to us must not come into being.

Drawing a conclusion on the existence of God is synonymous with drawing a conclusion on the existence of a cause, and causative conclusions are only permissible in the realm of science when they begin with



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١- Ibid., p. ۴٣٣.

٢- John "Jack" Frank Allen (١٩٠٨-٢٠٠١): a Canadian-born physicist who discovered,

along with Pyotr Leonidovich Kapitsa and Don Misener, the superfluid phase of matter in ۱۹۳۷ using liquid helium in the Royal Society Mond Laboratory in [.Cambridge, England. [Trans

Ithbāt-e Wujūd-e Khudā (Proving the Existence of God) written by ۴۰ scholars, -۳ .trans. Aḥmad Ārām, pp. ۱۸-۱۹

Bertrand Russell (۱۸۷۲ - ۱۹۷۰): a British philosopher, mathematician and man of -۴ letters. Initially a subscriber of idealism, he broke away in ۱۸۹۸ and eventually became an empiricist. His works include The Principles of Mathematics (۱۹۰۳), Principia Mathematica (۳ vols., ۱۹۱۰-۱۹۱۳) in collaboration with A.N. Whitehead, Marriage and Morals (۱۹۲۹), Education and the Social Order (۱۹۳۲), An Inquiry into Meaning and Truth (۱۹۴۰), History of Western Philosophy (۱۹۴۵), and popularizations such as The ABC of [.Relativity (۱۹۲۵), as well as his Autobiography (۳ vols., ۱۹۶۷-۶۹). [Trans

causal laws. Creating [something] out of nothing is something which is impossible in practice. As such, to suppose that the universe has been created by a creator is in no way more logical than the premise that the universe has come into being without any cause, because both the two violate the causal laws which we can observe with a single power (uniformly)."(۱)

**Reply**

Russell's objection is derived from his positivist foundation of epistemology. That is based on the principle of sensory acceptance of reality in the sense that any idea which cannot be tested through sensory experiment has no scientific value and is unacceptable. Yet, this foundation is also rejected by contemporary philosophers of science and its most manifest flaw is that this very claim of the positivists is also a piece of information which is not also a product of the senses and cannot be tested and experienced by the senses.

In principle, as stated in the fifth lesson, without relying on a series of rational principles, no empirical law – including the principle of non-contradiction, the law of causation and the principle of uniformity of nature – can be proven [to be true].

Human knowledge, therefore, can be classified into two, viz. rational and non-rational. Some components of the rational knowledge are so crucial and fundamental that denial of them necessitates denial of the human knowledge as a whole. On this basis, we maintain that the need of the phenomenon for a phenomenon-maker and of the originated for an



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۱- Bertrand Russell, Scientific Worldview, pp. ۱۱۴-۱۱۵.

originator is one of the rational axioms, and confirming it does not change anything .(but the correct conception of its components (originated, originator, need

In this way, it is true that none of the two assumptions – the spontaneous coming into existence of the universe and the creation of the universe by an Intelligent Creator – can be tested and experimented by the senses and for this reason, they have equal position, but it is not so from the rational perspective. Reason regards the first assumption as unacceptable and the second assumption as acceptable. Likewise, this .judgment of reason actually follows its judgment regarding the principle of causation

### Review Questions

.Explain the premises of the argument of contingency .١

Write down the argument of contingency in the words of the late 'Allāmah al- .٢ .Ṭabāṭabā'ī

Write down the necessary concomitance of matter and change regarding the .٣ .argument of contingency along with its refutation

How can the argument of contingency be proved to be true by applying the second .۴ ?law of thermodynamics

State the objection of Bertrand Russell to the argument of contingency along with .۵ .its refutation

## Lesson ٧: The Argument of Possibility and Necessity

### point

The argument of possibility (imkān) and necessity (wujūb) which is sometimes briefly described as the argument of possibility is one of the most solid rational arguments to prove the existence of God. This argument occupies a sublime station among the Muslim philosophers, being mentioned as the way of the philosophers in proving the existence of God. The lucid assertion of this argument is traceable to Ibn Sīnā (died

.AH) and through him it has also found its way into the Christian theology ۴۳۷

One of the arguments of Thomas Aquinas (died ۱۲۷۴), the famous Christian theologian, is the argument of possibility and necessity. He has learned this argument from Mūsā ibn Maymūn(۱) (died ۱۲۰۴), the Jewish theologian, who, in turn, has learned it from Ibn Sīnā. The firmness of this argument has led Muḥaqqiq al-Ṭūsī to rely on it mostly in his ,book Tajrīd al-Aqā'id in proving the existence of God. In his words

اَلمَوْجودُ إنْ كانَ واجِباً فَهُوَ الْمَطْلوبُ، وَإلاّ اِسْتَلزَمَهُ دَفْعاً لِلدَّوْرِ وَالتَّسَلْسُلِ.

That is to say, "If the existent (to whose existence there is no doubt) is the Necessary Being (wajib al-wujūd) by essence, our object of desire (maṭlūb) is proved to be real. And if it is not so, it necessitates the existence of the Necessary Being by essence so .as not to require a vicious cycle of definitions or arguments

### The Argument's Premises

That there is a reality out there is not something imaginary or illusionary. There is no .۱ doubt about it. Denial of this fact will be nothing except sophistry, and by accepting sophistry, there will be no way for any discussion or discourse and there will be no .room for proving or negating the existence of God

That which has reality and existence is rationally either of the two possibilities. One .۲ is that its reality and existence is identical with its essence and in its reality, it does not depend or need anybody or anything



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Mūsā ibn Maymūn (۱۱۵۳-۱۲۰۴): the Qurtubā (Cordova)-born well-known Jewish - ۱ philosopher, theologian and physician who moved to Morocco and Palestine and finally settled in Cairo, Egypt, where he became a physician in the court of Sulṭān Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn and the leader of the Jewish community there. His major works in medicine and philosophy were written in Arabic and his ۱۴-volume magnus opus in [.theology remains a major source of Jewish theology and law to this day. [Trans

else (the Necessary Being by essence). Another possibility is that in its reality and existence, it is in need of another existent (Possible Being by essence). The first possibility is what is claimed by the theists who regard God, the Exalted, as its manifestation, and this is what the argument of possibility and necessity seeks to .prove

An existent which is in need of another existent in its reality and existence is an .۳ effect and the existence of an effect without the existence of its cause is impossible. .Therefore, the existence of effect necessitates the existence of its cause

The existence of cause is either the Necessary Being by essence or the Possible .۴ Being by essence. In the first case, it is sought after, proved and attained, and in the .second case, the existence of a cause is an effect of another existent

If an existent whose cause is its effect is the very effect, a vicious cycle of .۵ arguments is inevitable. That is, a thing is the cause as well as the effect of another thing. There is no doubt that the cause comes first before the effect. A thing thus comes before (for being the cause) as well as after (for being an effect) another thing. This coming before (taqaddum) and after (ta'akhkhar) also exists in a thing; that is its very existence. As a result, there arises a contradiction which is essentially and .axiomatically impossible

In other words, the effect of the effect of a thing is its

effect, just as the cause of the cause of a thing is its cause. Here, A is the effect of B and B is the effect of A. Therefore, A is the effect of A; that is, the existence of A comes before (for being the cause) as well as after (for being an effect) its essence, .[and it is a clear contradiction [of thinking

If an existent whose cause is another existent other than the effect and this .۶ existent is an effect of yet another existent, and this process continues ad infinitum such that it does not end in the Existent that is not an effect, this necessitates the existence of an unbroken chain of cause and effect which is rationally impossible .likewise

This is because in this case, all existents are possible beings and are in need [of .۷ causes prior to their existence], and on the other hand, the existent in need [of a prior .cause] will not exist without another existent which gives existence to it

Therefore, the concomitance of circular argument is that no existent will come into .۸ being and this is false and contrary to the first premise. And if we consider their existence incontrovertible and at the same time deny the existence of their cause, we .have actually denied the principle of causation

The assumption of an unbroken chain of cause and effect is like the case of infinite lamps that have spontaneously acquired light from nowhere; that is an effect without a

.cause

From the above assertion, it becomes clear that the argument of possibility and necessity is a rational analysis and synthesis about reality and existence, and its point of beginning is the acceptance of the principle that reality (wāqi‘iyyah) can be divided into two, viz. necessary (wājib) and possible (mumkin). And in both cases, the object of desire (wājib al-wujūd bi ’dh-dhāt or the Necessary Being by essence) can be proved .[[to be logically true

In the first argument, therefore, the states and attributes of the existents, through whose contingency, order and movement the existence of God is asserted, are not examined. It is true that the attribute of ‘possibility’ (imkān) is also mentioned in this argument, but this attribute, like the attribute of ‘necessity’ (wujūb), is attained through rational analysis and not through sensory observation and pondering over :natural creatures. For this reason, Ṣadr al-Muta’allihīn has said

If the theosophers had not also observed the existence of the tangible world, their“ belief concerning the existence of God, His Attributes and all His Actions would have (been different from their existing belief.”(١

## Bertrand Russell’s Misgiving

### point

:In his book Why Am I Not a Christian? Bertrand Russell says

The first rational argument in proving [the truth of] the existence of God is that“ everything that we can see in the world has a cause, and no matter how long this chain of causes takes, it must end up in the First Cause and finally this First Cause ”.’shall be called ‘God

:In criticizing this argument, he then says

If“

.Ṣadr al-Muta’allihīn, Sharḥ al-Hidāyat al-Athīriyyah, p. ۲۸۳ -۱

every thing must have a cause or reason, then the existence of God must have also a cause or reason, and if there is a thing which can exist without a cause or reason, disputing about the existence of God will be useless because the existence of nature is also possible without a cause."(۱)

**Reply**

The reply to this misgiving is clear, provided that we acknowledge the value of reason in judging theoretical disputes, because in its rulings and judgments, reason follows fixed and categorical criteria and standards, and it will never issue a definite judgment unconscionably or on the basis of untenable criteria. The criterion of the dictate of reason regarding causation – that is, an existent's need for a cause – is that the existent is in a situation when existence and non-existence are equal in terms of its essence.

The assumption of the emergence of such an existent without the existence of a cause is tantamount to contradiction; that is, it has both existence and non-existence. If the negation and affirmation of both are equal as far as its essence is concerned, then there is contradiction. The solution to this contradiction is for us to say that it has existence on account of something outside its essence; hence, it is in need of another (i.e. cause)).

Any existent in which this criterion exists is in need of a cause – whether it is material or not material, essential or accidental, objective or subjective, etc. On the contrary, any Existent in



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۱- Bertrand Russell, Why Am I Not a Christian, trans. S.A.S. Ṭāhirī, p. ۱۹.

which this criterion cannot be found in the sense that existence and non-existence are not the same as far as Its essence is concerned, and in fact, existence and necessity are identical with Its essence and reality, then any talk about causation with .respect to It is irrational and inconsequential

Meanwhile, as to whether such a Reality exists or not, the answer is affirmative, and the reason for this is the very argument of necessity and possibility and the impossibility of circular proof. Without this Reality, the world of being cannot be rationally explained and interpreted. That is, negation of the Necessary Being by essence necessitates negation of the principle of reality and existence (including the necessary and possible), and in clearer terms, negation of the Necessary Being by .essence is tantamount to the negation of the existence of God

It is necessary to point out here that what is meant by 'explaining' and 'interpreting' the world on the basis of the belief in the Necessary Being by essence has nothing to do with the way these two words ('explain' and 'interpret') are construed in scientific hypotheses. Interpreting natural facts and events on the basis of hypotheses will never arrive at the logical certainty, because the correctness of hypothesis cannot be established by logical analysis and rational argument; rather, the way of proving it is sensory experimentation and experience, and in view of the limitations of the empirical method, the possibility of contrary result cannot be totally ruled out. However, explaining the

world on the basis of the existence of the Necessary Being by essence can be realized through logical analysis and rational argument which are anchored in the principle of .non-contradiction

In clearer terms, by assuming that heat is not the cause of expansion of metals, no contradiction necessarily arises, but to assume that there is no Necessary Being by .essence in the chain of existence, this is tantamount to contradiction

In principle, if every thing is supposed to be in need of an explanation and anything which has no explanation is not correct, then one can ask Mr. Russell, for example, "Why did you pick up the book from the library's bookshelf?" One of his probable answers is this: "I wanted to read it." And if he would be asked why he wanted to ready it, his answer might be: "This is because I consider reading useful and ".interesting

If he would be asked, "Why do you desire for anything which is useful and interesting?" most probably he could not give any answer to this question. In this case, based on his notion that anything which cannot be explained is not correct, it necessarily follows that he must deny himself because he cannot explain the fact that )he wants to do anything which is useful and good.(١

**Review Questions**

.Briefly state the argument of possibility and necessity along with its six premises .١

State and refute Bertrand Russell's objection to the argument of possibility and .٢ .necessity

Write briefly the historical background of the argument .٣



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This argument is made by 'Allāmah Muḥammad Taqī Ja'farī in his book Barguzīdeh- -١ .ye Afkār-e Russell (A Selection of Russell's Ideas), p. ٧١

.of possibility and necessity

.State briefly the assertion of the argument of possibility and necessity .۴

?What conclusion can be drawn from the argument of possibility and necessity .۵

## Lesson ۸: The Unity of God's Essence and Attributes

### point

Tawḥīd or the Oneness of God is one of the most important dimensions of the propagation and teaching of the prophets of God (‘a). Whenever the Holy Qur’an gives the account of the propagation activity of such prophets as Nūḥ (Noah), Hūd, Ṣāliḥ and Shu‘ayb (Jethro) (‘a), it mentions that the first message they conveyed to :their respective communities is this

( اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَٰهٍ غَيْرُهُ )

(Worship Allah! You have no other god besides Him."(۱"

It also regards the call to monotheism as one of the objectives of the mission (bi‘thah) :(of the prophets (‘a

( وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَّسُولاً أَنِ اعْبُدُواْ اللّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُواْ الطَّاغُوتَ )

Certainly We raised an apostle in every nation [to preach:] ‘Worship Allah, and keep" (away from the Rebel’."(۲

The special importance of this issue has prompted the scholastic theologians (mutakallimūn) to occasionally deal with the subject separate from other Attributes of God. For this reason, before embarking on the discussion about the Positive and Negative Attributes of God, we shall touch on the question of tawḥīd after the discussion on the Essence and Existence of God. Since the Unity of the Divine Essence (dhāt) is so closely related to the Unity of the Divine Attributes (ṣifāt), we shall .examine the two subjects together

### The Unity of the Divine Essence .۱

**point**

The Unity of the Divine Essence (tawḥīd-e dhātī) means that the Essence of God



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۱- Sūrat al-A‘rāf ۷:۵۹, ۶۵, ۷۳, ۸۵.

۲- Sūrat an-Naḥl ۱۶:۳۶.

:is One or Unique. The Oneness or Unity of the Divine Essence has two meanings

The Essence which in Itself is not in need of any cause is only God. Therefore, all .١ essences (dhawāt) and existents (mawjūdāt) – whether they are physical or non-physical, essential (jawharī) or accidental (‘arḍī), animate or inanimate – are possible beings, needy and effects [of a prior cause]. Hence, the Essence of God is not in need of any cause [for Itself to exist] and has utter absence of necessity for any partner or .similarity

The Essence of God is not constituted by parts, and there is no sort of multiplicity .٢ .and plurality in the Divine Essence

### Types of Compositeness

Rational compositeness (tarkīb) by parts, such as the composition of quiddity .١ (māhiyyah) by genus (jins) and differentia (faṣl), and the composition of possible being (mawjūd-e mumkin) by existence (wujūd) and quiddity (māhiyyah). This type of compositeness is derived from existential limitation, and since the existence of God is infinite and limitless, such compositeness with respect to God is impossible [to .[happen

Compositeness by physical and elemental parts, such as the natural creatures .٢ which are composed of different elements, and the elements which are composed of atoms. This type of compositeness is one of the properties (lawāzim) of a physical being and since God is not physical,(١) such compositeness with respect to God is .impossible

Compositeness by matter (māddah) and form (ṣūrah), such as the body being .٣ composed of matter(٢) and form. This compositeness is also impossible with



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This is because to be physical is concomitant with dependence, change and - ١ deterioration, and these are properties of possible beings (mumkin al-wujūd), while .God is the Necessary Being by essence

٢ - This refers to philosophical matter and not to physical or natural matter, and to prove or negate it is only possible through philosophical argument and not by means of sensory test and experiment.

respect to God, because compositeness is one of the characteristics of a physical being, and God is not a body [or corporeal being].

Since compositeness is impossible with respect to the Necessary Being by essence, the existence of two necessary beings is also impossible because their existence necessitates that each of them is composed of their commonalities (mā bihi ’l-istirāk) and their particularities (mā bihi ’l-imtiyāz) and the existence of two beings with the same essence is only possible when although they are common in essence, each of them must have its/his own peculiarity. As a result, each of them is composed of two things, viz. their commonalities and their particularities.

And compositeness (tarkīb), as stated above, is concomitant with limitation and neediness which are contradictory to the absolute independence of the Necessary Being by essence.

The two stated meanings have been mentioned in a tradition (ḥadīth) from Imām ‘Alī (‘a). Someone asked the Imām (‘a) concerning the Oneness of God. The Imām (‘a) replied, “Oneness has four meanings; two of them can be applied to God while the other two cannot be applied to Him. The two inapplicable meanings are as follows:

۱. Numerical oneness because in numerical oneness, any notion of two, three, etc. is impossible; and

۲. Oneness of genus, such as the human beings that belong to the same species; such oneness does not also hinder multiplicity and plurality.

And the two applicable meanings [of oneness] are as follows:

۱. God’s uniqueness in Essence and Attributes, and

۲. The indivisibility and inseparability of the

(Essence of God.(1)

### Trinity or Polytheism in the Essence of God

One of the well-known doctrines in Christianity is the doctrine of the Trinity. While regarding themselves as monotheists, Trinitarian Christians believe in three Persons (or Essences) which are as follows:

1. The Person of the Essence (God the Father);

2. The Person of the Word (God the Son); and

3. The Person of Life (God the Holy Spirit).

According to them, each of these Persons completely possesses the truth of Godhood and all of these Persons are the same in the truth of Godhood. Thus, the truth of Godhood is one thing and for this reason, while God is One, He has three Persons.

In other words, the Essence of God (God the Father) has been reincarnated in the Person of the Word (Jesus Christ) through the Person of Life (God the Holy Spirit) and manifested in the image of Jesus Christ. For example, the Gospel According to St. John begins with this passage: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us."(2)

And it is thus stated in the Epistle of Paul the Apostle which was written about ten years prior to the Gospel of John:

"God who, in numerous Persons and different channels of the prophets, had talked with our fathers in the past, now talked with us these days through His Son. He took him as the inheritor of all creatures and created the worlds through him."(3)

In this regard, therefore, Trinitarian Christians believe



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1- Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, Al-Tawḥīd, section (bāb) 3, ḥadīth 3.

۲ - John ۱:۱, ۱۴. In this volume, the King James Version of the Bible is adopted for Biblical passages, unless otherwise stated. [Trans.]

۳- Epistle of Paul.

:in three things, thus

;Christ is the Son of God .۱

Christ is God (God the Reincarnate); and .۲

.There are three Divine Essences and God is the third of them .۳

Thee are doctrines which the Holy Qur’an has also mentioned and proscribed all of :them as polytheistic beliefs. It states, thus

( لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ )

(They are certainly faithless who say, ‘Allah is the Messiah, son of Mary’.”(۱“

( لَّقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُواْ إِنَّ اللّهَ ثَالِثُ ثَلاَثَةٍ وَمَا مِنْ إِلَـهٍ إِلاَّ إِلَـهٌ وَاحِدٌ )

They are certainly faithless who say, ‘Allah is the third [person] of a trinity,’ while“ (there is no god except the One God.”(۲

( وَقَالَتِ النَّصَارَى الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ قَوْلُهُمْ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ يُضَاهِئُونَ قَوْلَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ )

And the Christians say, ‘Christ is the son of Allah.’ That is an opinion that they mouth,“ (imitating the opinions of the faithless of former times.”(۳

It can be inferred from the last verse that belief in the divinity of the Messiah (‘a) and that he is the Son of God was that of the unbelievers of the past and has crept into the religion associated with him, and it is not something which the Holy Messiah (‘a) has ever taught to his followers. As Gustave Le Bon(۴) who was himself a French Christian, ,has said

Throughout the first five centuries of its existence, by absorbing Greco-Roman and“ Oriental philosophical and religious ideas, Christianity gradually evolved and turned ,into an amalgamation of religious beliefs, and the new Trinity (Father

۱- Sūrat al-Mā’idah ۵:۱۷, ۷۲.

۲- Sūrat al-Mā’idah ۵:۷۳.

۳- Sūrat al-Tawbah (or Barā’ah) ۹:۳۰.

۴- Gustave Le Bon (۱۸۴۱-۱۹۳۱): a French social psychologist, sociologist, and amateur physicist. [Trans.]

Son and the Holy Spirit) became the replacement of the former trinity, and the worship of God in the Trinity replaced the gods of the olden days."

## 2. The Unity of the Divine Attributes

### point

The Unity of the Divine Attributes has two meanings:

1. God has no equal in His Attributes, because:

Firstly, the Attributes of God are of Him and no one has bestowed them upon Him.

Secondly, His Attributes of Perfection are infinite and limitless, and these two characteristics are concomitant with God being the Necessary Being by essence as well as His absolute self-sufficiency and independence.

2. The Attributes of Perfection of God are identical with His Essence. That is, although they differ in terms of meaning (mafhūm), in terms of applicability (miṣdāq) they are in unison. In other words, it is not the case that the Essence of God, on one hand, is All-knowing, and on the other hand, All-powerful and Sovereign; rather, His knowledge, power and will are His very Essence, because if the Attributes of God were extraneous to His Essence and distinct from each other, this implies a sort of multiplicity (kathrah), compositeness (tarkīb) and limitation (maḥdūdiyyah) in the Divine Essence, and all these characteristics cannot be applied to God.

Moreover, in originating the creatures and bestowing knowledge and power to them, He would be in need of His Attributes (Knowledge and Power) which are assumed to be distinct from His Essence, and neediness is contradictory to God as the Necessary Being and Self-sufficient.

We shall explain the Unity of the Divine Essence and Attributes in terms

of applicability, and their multiplicity and variance in terms of meaning by citing two :examples

The human being is knowledgeable of himself; that is, he has knowledge by .١ presence or intuitive knowledge (‘ilm-e ḥudūrī). Here, we can infer three concepts, viz. the knowledge (‘ilm), the knower (‘ālim) and the known (ma‘lūm). This is while the applicability of all is something other than his person; that is, his person is the .applicability of the knowledge, the knower as well as the known

In comparison to God, every creature is the created (makhlūq), the known (ma‘lūm) .٢ as well as the possible (maqdūr). So, while reality is one thing, different meanings of it can be abstracted. Of course, in abstracting different meanings from a reality, different signifiers can be considered, but these signifiers have subjective multiplicity .and not objective

The same is true with the abstraction of the different meanings and attributes of the Indivisible Essence of God. The notion of the extraneousness of the Attributes from the Essence and their distinction from the Essence as propounded by the Sunnī Ash‘arīs is thus incorrect, and the doctrine of the identicalness of the Attributes with .the Essence as maintained by the Imāmiyyah and Mu‘tazilīs is correct and firm

### The Unity of the Divine Attributes in the Traditions

In the traditions reported from the Imāms of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a), the Unity of the Divine Attributes has been much emphasized, and the belief in the Essential Attributes of God as separate from His Essence has been considered unacceptable. Imām ‘Alī (‘a) has regarded purging the

Essence of extraneous attributes as the perfection of purity in the Divine Unity (tawḥīd), saying:

وَكَمَالُ تَوْحِيدِهِ الْإِخْلَاصُ لَهُ، وَكَمَالُ الْإِخْلَاصِ لَهُ نَفْيُ الصِّفَاتِ عَنْهُ.

“And the perfection of believing in His Oneness is to regard Him as Pure, and the perfection of His purity is to deny Him attributes.”(۱)

The Imām (‘a) has then said that the corollary of belief in attributes which are separate from the Essence is belief in a kind of polytheism and divisibility of the Divine Essence, which is a product of ignorance of the Divine Station:

“Thus, whoever attaches attributes to Allah recognizes His like, and whoever recognizes His like regards Him as two, and whoever regards Him as two recognizes parts for Him, and whoever recognizes parts for Him mistook Him.”(۲)

It is evident that what is meant by the negation of the Attributes of God is the negation of attributes which are separate from His Essence and not the real Attributes, because negation of the Attributes of Perfection of God is impossible. Moreover, in many of his statements, Imām ‘Alī (‘a) has described the Divine Attributes of Perfection (knowledge, power, will, etc.).

Imām Ḥasan al-Mujtabā (‘a) has said: “In reality, the Attributes of God are not different from each other, because if they were so, in terms of existential perfection the Essence of God would become finite and limited.(۳)

Imām Muḥammad al-Jawād (‘a) has said that God is One in inward reality, and diverse multiple meanings and attributes have no way to His Essence.(۴)

It can be deduced from some



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۱- Nahj al-Balāghah, Sermon ۱.

۲- Ibid.

۳- Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, Al-Tawḥīd, section (bāb) ۲, ḥadīth ۵.

۴- Ibid., section (bāb) ۱۱, ḥadīth ۹.

traditions that belief in attributes separate from the Divine Essence was prevalent during the time of the pure Imāms (‘a) such that some Shī‘ah were also inclined to it and the Imāms of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) have explicitly declared it to be incorrect. The reasons for the incorrectness of this belief as mentioned in the traditions are as follows:

١. Belief in attributes separate from the Divine Essence is a kind of polytheism (implicit polytheism);

٢. This belief necessitates anthromopomorphism; and

٣. It is in conflict with the Indivisibility and Oneness of the Sacred Divine Essence.[١]

### Insufficient Formula

The forerunners of Ashā‘irah and Māturdiyyah schools of theology who have subscribed to the Attributes as distinct from the Essence of God have adopted a formula in a bid to refute the criticisms (especially about the multiplicity of the eternals) made against their notion. It is as follows: [٢]

لا يُقالُ هِيَ هُوَ وَلا غِيْرُهُ.

That is to say that although the Essential Attributes of God are distinct from His Essence, it cannot be said that they are identical with His Essence or they are other than His Essence. That is, identicalness and distinctness are both negated.

Yet, apart from containing contradiction, this formula cannot solve the problem, because once the attributes distinct from the Divine Essence have their own reality, they are either possible beings or necessary beings. The second assumption is in conflict with the Essential Oneness of God, and in the first assumption, the reality of the attributes is an effect.

If it is an effect of

١- In this regard, see the book Al-Ilāhiyyāt fī Madrasat Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) by the author.

٢- In this regard, see the book Al-Ilāhiyyāt fī Madrasat Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) by the author.

something other than God, it is concomitant with God's need for other than Him, which is impossible. And if it is an effect of the Essence of God, the assumption is that the Essence lacks those attributes and that which is devoid of perfection cannot .bestow perfection

ذات نایافته از هستی بخش کی تواند که شود هستی بخش

,The Essence that cannot be found from the existence-bestower

?Who can become the existence-bestower

## Review Questions

۱. Write down the meaning of the Unity of the Divine Essence.

۲. For what reason is God not composed of parts?

۳. Write down the statement of the Commander of the Faithful (Imām 'Alī) ('a) about the meaning of the Divine Unity (tawḥīd).

۴. Describe the doctrine of Trinity and prove its falsity.

۵. Write down the meaning of the Unity of the Divine Attributes.

۶. Explain along with examples the Unity of the Divine Essence and Attributes in terms of their applicability and their difference in terms of meaning.

۷. What is the problem of the multiplicity of the eternals? State and assess the way of solving it.

## Lesson ۹: The Unity of God in Creation

### point

To create or originate is one of the attributes of God. This attribute necessitates arguments to prove the existence of God, for the purport of those arguments is that God is the Origin and Cause of causes of all creatures. All beings, therefore, are His creation and construction. Now, the discussion is that God has no partner in the act of

.creation and there is no Creator of the universe other than Him

## Reason and the Divine Unity in Creation

Reason clearly testifies to

the Oneness of the Creator and Originator of the universe, for as dictated by the arguments proving the existence of God – particularly the argument of possibility and necessity – all beings are contingents, effects and creatures of the Necessary Being (God) and as demanded by the arguments of the Essential Unity of God, the Necessary Being by essence is One, and thus, the Creator and Originator of the universe is no other than God.

### The Qur’an and the Divine Unity in Creation

In many verses, the Holy Qur’an has emphasized the Oneness of God in creating the universe. For example, it has stated:

( قُلِ اللَّهُ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ )

“Say, ‘Allah is the creator of all things, and He is the One, the All-paramount’.”(١)

( اللَّهُ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَكِيلٌ )

“Allah is creator of all things, and He watches over all things.”(٢)

( ذَلِكُمُ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ لا إِلَهَ إِلا هُوَ )

“That is Allah, your Lord, the creator of all things, there is no god except Him.”(٣)

( هَلْ مِنْ خَالِقٍ غَيْرُ اللَّهِ )

“Is there any creator other than Allah?”(٤)

( رَبُّنَا الَّذِى أَعْطَى كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلْقَهُ ثُمَّ هَدَى )

“Our Lord is He who gave everything its creation and then guided it.”(٥)

### Traditions and the Divine Unity in Creation

The traditions (aḥādīth) also stipulate and emphasize the Divine Unity in creation. In this regard, Imām ‘Alī (‘a) has said [about the creation of ant]:

لَمْ يَشْرَكْهُ فِى فِطْرَتِهَا فَاطِرٌ، وَلَمْ يُعِنْهُ عَلَىٰ خَلْقِهَا قَادِرٌ.

No other originator took part with Him in its origination and no one having power“ assisted Him in its



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.Sūrat ar-Ra‘d ۱۳:۱۶ -۱

.Sūrat al-Zumar ۳۹:۶۲ -۲

.Sūrat al-Ghāfir (or al-Mu’min) ۴۰:۶۲ -۳

.Sūrat Fāṭir (or al-Malā’ikah) ۳۵:۳ -۴

.Sūrat Ṭā Ḥā ۲۰:۵۰ -۵

creation.”(١)

The Imām (‘a) has also said:

وَلَا شَرِيكٍ أَعَانَهُ عَلَى ابْتِدَاعِ عَجَائِبِ الْأُمُورِ.

“And He is without any partner who might have assisted Him in creating wonderful things.”(٢)

Similar points are also mentioned in many other traditions.

## The Interpretation of the Divine Unity in Creation

### point

Muslims schools of thought have consensus of opinion on the Divine Unity in creation, but in interpreting it three viewpoints have been put forth.

### ١. Imāmiyyah Theologians and Muslims Theosophers

According to them, what is meant by the exclusiveness of God in creating is that there is no essential and independent Creator or Originator except God, but they do not deny natural and supranatural causes and factors. In their view, the angels perform specific activities just as the human being is the performer of his own activities, and natural causes have also their own particular effects but none of them is an essentially independent agent or cause.

This theory – apart from being concomitant with rational laws and affirmed by the senses and experience – can clearly be deduced from verses of the Qur’an, for in many verses the Qur’an has pointed out the contribution of supernatural causes in the emergence of some natural events as well as the human agency.

### ٢. ‘Ashā‘irah

According to them, the act of creation is directly or indirectly exclusive to God, and in the world of creation, there is no agent or cause except God and those regarded as natural causes or factors are called “God’s practice” (‘ādat Allāh).

That is, it has been God's precedent (sunnat Allāh) that, for instance, there is heat following the existence of fire and



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۱- Nahj al-Balāghah, Sermon ۱۸۵.

۲- Nahj al-Balāghah, Sermon ۹۱.

following the rising of the sun, the horizon becomes bright. Yet, there is no real or cosmic relationship between the causes and the originators of existence. Even the human being is not the agent of his actions; the human actions are also part of the .Action of God

### Mu‘tazilah .۳

#### point

They have acknowledged natural causes and factors but they do not regard the human being’s voluntary actions as God’s creation (makhlūq); they rather consider them as solely human actions. For this reason, they are called mufawwiḍah; that is, those who believe that the human being’s actions have been delegated (tafwīḍ) to .him

#### Examination and Criticism

None of the last two theories is correct. Apart from being in conflict with rational (‘aqlī) and textual (naqlī) proofs regarding the natural causes and factors as well as the human agency (fā‘iliyyah), the first view necessitates human compulsion (jabr), and compulsion in actions are inconsistent with the concepts of duty, retribution and .reward

The theory of mufawwiḍah is also at loggerheads with the Divine Unity in creation and the universality of the Divine Power. The source of mistake of both groups is in supposing that the natural causes or human actions are within the level of God’s .(agency and causality (sababiyyah

This is so while such an interpretation of the natural and supernatural causes and factors is not correct. Their relationship with the agency and causality of God is a vertical one; that is, God is the Independent (mustaqil) and Essential (bi ’dh-dhāt) Agent while they are agents and causes that are

.dependent (ghayr mustaqil) and subordinated (musakhkhar) by God

For this reason, in the Holy Qur’an an action may sometimes be attributed to God and at other times the attribution is to natural and supernatural causes. For instance, it :says regarding the following verse

( أَللَّهُ يَتَوَفَّى الْأَنفُسَ حِينَ مَوْتِهَا )

(God takes the souls at the time of their death.”(١“

:It also says

( قُلْ يَتَوَفَّاكُمْ مَلَكُ الْمَوْتِ الَّذِي وُكِّلَ بِكُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَى رَبِّكُمْ تُرْجَعُونَ )

Say, ‘You will be taken away by the angel of death, who has been charged with you.“ (Then you will be brought back to your Lord.’”(٢

:And it thus says regarding the movement of clouds

( أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُزْجِي سَحَابًا ثُمَّ يُؤَلِّفُ بَيْنَهُ )

(Have you not regarded that Allah drives the clouds, then He omposes them?”(٣“

:And the Qur’an also says

( اللَّهُ الَّذِي يُرْسِلُ الرِّيَاحَ فَتُثِيرُ سَحَابًا )

(It is Allah who sends the winds. Then they raise a cloud.”(٤“

### The Dualists and the Misgiving of Evils

In the history of religions and sects, there is mention about the dualists who believe in two creators, viz. the creator of good and the creator of evils. The creator of good is .(called Yazdān (Light) and the creator of evils Ahrimān (Darkness

The source of this incorrect doctrine is their assumption that evils are part of the reality of existence and against good, and since God (Yazdān) is Pure Good, it is impossible for Him to be the origin of evils. For this reason, there must be another

.source and originator of evils

(In reply to them, the theosophers have argued that evil (sharr

p: ٨٣

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.Sūrat al-Zumar ٣٩:۴٢ -١

.Sūrat al-Sajdah ٣:١١ -٢

.Sūrat al-Nūr ٢۴:۴٣ -٣

.Sūrat al-Rūm ٣٠:۴٨ -۴

is a matter of absence (‘adam) and its relation to good (khayr) is that of possession and non-possession, and not that of contradiction and contrast. Ignorance which is regarded as evil, for example, is not an existential matter; it is rather the absence of knowledge in something which is knowable; so is the case of poverty, illness, death .and other things considered evils

This is also the case of evil in relation to undesirable natural happenings, fierce animals and biting creatures, for the existence of these things for themselves is not evil or undesirable; it is rather in comparison to other creatures that they are treated as harmful. For instance, the snake or scorpion is not evil or undesirable by itself; it is .rather evil for the human beings and the like

That is, its poison may lead to human illness or death and it is this illness or death which is evil, and death and illness have the nature of non-existence or absence. Illness means the absence of wellbeing while death means the absence of life. In the (words of Mawlānā [Rūmī],(۱)

زهرِ مار، آن مار را باشد حیات گرچه باشد آدمی را مر ممات

,Snake-poison is life to the snake

(But) it is death in relation to man.(۲)

It is evident that what is in need of the Creator or Originator is existence and not non-existence. Therefore, the world of creation is not in need of a creator other than God, and that which He creates is good and evils emanate from



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۱- Mawlāwī or Mawlānā Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (۱۲۰۷-۷۳): the greatest mystic poet in the Persian language and founder of the Mawlawiyyah order of dervishes (“The Whirling Dervishes”). He is famous for his lyrics and his didactic epic, Mathnawī-ye Maḥnawī (Spiritual Couplets). [Trans.]

۲- Richard Nicholson (trans.), Mathnawī-ye Ma‘nawī, Book Four, p. ۱۳. [Trans.]

(absences and non-existences, and they are not realities alongside the good.(1)

### Reply to a Question

If evil has the nature of absence, how come that it becomes a source of suffering and trouble for the human being considering the fact that absence cannot be the origin of any effect?

The reply is that evil is the absence of possession and absolute absence; that is, the absence of a trait on something which it can ably and duly possess. For this reason, the human being suffers from lack of knowledge or sight but does not suffer from lacking a horn.(2)

### The Divine Unity in Creation and the Problem of Ascribing Evils to God

The problem which is put forth here is that based on the principle of the Divine Unity in creation, it necessitates that undesirable things that happen to the human beings (and others) are attributed to God and this matter is in contradiction to the principle that God is free from undesirable acts. This problem leads to the Mu'tazilīs' belief in the notion of tafwīḍ,(3) and on the Ashā'irah's side, no acceptable way of solving this problem has also been presented.

In the school of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), this problem has been solved by arguing that human actions can be studied from three perspectives:

1. From the perspective that these actions are part of the events and happenings of the world of creation, they are ascribed to God and no evil or wickedness finds its way into them, for reality or existence vis-à-vis absence or non-existence possesses the attribute of goodness and beauty. The Holy Qur'an thus says:

(الَّذِی



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1- In this regard, Ḥakīm Sabziwārī has said: الشّرء أعدام فَكَمْ قَدْ ضَلَّ مَنْ يَقولُ بِاليَزْدانِ، ثُمَّ الأهْرِمَن Evil

is non-existence, so how misguided they are Who believe in Yazdān and Ahriman!

۲- In this regard, Ḥakīm Sabziwārī has said: وان عليك اعتاص تأثير العـدم من سـلب قرن منك من سـلب النّعم If understanding the effect of ‘absence’ is difficult for you, Distinguish your lack of a horn from the absence of favors.

۳- Tafwīḍ: the belief that after creating all beings, God has left them to administer their own affairs and follow their own wills. In other words, it is the upholding of freewill [ikhtiyār] vis-à-vis predestination. [Trans.]

أَحْسَنَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهُ )

“[It is He] who perfected everything that He created.”(۱)

From the perspective of reality and existence, human actions are also a creation of God (and what is meant by ‘good’ here is cosmic (takwīnī) and not moral goodness).

۲. From the perspective that they emanate from the human being’s freewill and volition and are ascribed to him, they shall be described as morally good or bad. Honesty is good while lying is evil. Justice is desirable while injustice is undesirable.

This kind of good and evil stems from conformity or non-conformity of his actions to the rational laws and the religious commandments and prohibitions, and since the human willpower and resolution determines the said conformity or non-conformity, the said good and evil shall also be ascribed to the human being.

۳. It is true that God has endowed the human being with the power and will to do good or bad, but on the other hand, through commandments and prohibitions, promises and threats, good tidings and warnings, He has encouraged him toward what is good and dissuaded him from what is evil. As such, it is more appropriate to ascribe the human being’s good deeds to God and his wicked acts to himself.

**Review Questions**

۱. What is the argument to prove the Oneness of God in creation?

۲. Write down two Qur’anic verses and a tradition (ḥadīth) about the Divine Unity (tawḥīd) in creation.

۳. State the three theories presented about the Divine Unity in creation.

۴. Write down the Ashā‘irah and Mu‘tazilī theories about



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۱- Sūrat al-Sajdah ۳۲:۷.

.the Divine Unity in creation and state the proof of error of each of them

Write down the problem of the dualists regarding evils along with the refutation to .۵ this notion.

.State the problem and refutation to the non-existence of evil .۶

Write down the principle of Divine Unity in creation and the problem of ascribing .۷ evils to God along with a refutation to this notion.

## Lesson ۱۰: The Divine Unity in Lordship

### point

Rubūbiyyah or Lordship is one of the Attributes of Perfection of God. Rubūbiyyah is derived from the word rabb and lexicographically an infinite (maṣdar) which means tarbiyyah (nurture) but it is most frequently used in the sense of the doer of action (ism fā'il) meaning 'nurturer'. This word, in the latter sense, is exclusively and absolutely applied to God, but it is also applied sometimes to other than God, as in the words rabb al-dār (head of the house), rabb al-firdaws (doyen of the paradise), etc.(۱)

The word tadbīr (management) in the sense of rubūbiyyah (lordship) has been used a lot in Qur'anic verses and traditions (aḥādīth). Tadbīr means to put a thing next to another thing in a particular order and arrangement in such a way that the intended .purpose of each of them could be attained

For example, managing (tadbīr) home affairs is to put each thing in its suitable place so that it could be used in the most appropriate manner without wasting anything. Managing the affairs of the universe means to create a particular order among the creatures in such



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.Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, Al-Mufradāt, under the word rabb -۱

.a way that every creature could attain its desired perfection

This kind of management is a specific management which pertains to every phenomenon but the general management in relation to the entire universe is to let such an order govern the universe so that the world of creation could reach its (ultimate goal which is the return to God and the emergence of the hereafter.(١

## Cosmic and Legislative Lordship

What has been discussed so far pertains to the cosmic (takwīnī) Lordship and management of the universe, but with respect to some creatures, legislative (tashrīʿī) lordship and management are also raised, and this pertains to the creatures which, in .addition to the instinctive guidance, also possess rational guidance

For this reason, they have also rational responsibility but since their reason is not that perfect and that capable in every aspect, they are also in need of legislative guidance which has been provided by the prophets of God (ʿa) and the heavenly religion. This subject constitutes the foundation of prophethood (nubuwwah) and heavenly codes .of law. Therefore, one of the manifestations of Lordship is the legislative one

## Lordship in This World and the Hereafter

### point

The scope of Lordship (rubūbiyyah) is not limited to this world as it also extends to the Hereafter, and the issues such as forgiveness and expiation of sins, permission to intercede (shafāʿah) and granting it and others related to the Hereafter are also .among the myriad manifestations of Lordship

Hence, Lordship or Management (tadbīr) has numerous manifestations and expressions, some of which are related to this world while others pertain to



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Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Ṭabāṭabāʾī, Al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qurʾān, vol. ١١, pp. -١ .٢٨٩-٢٩٠

the next world. Some concern the cosmic realm while others are relevant to the legislative domain, and the concomitance of the principle of the Divine Unity in Lordship is that all these manifestations and expressions [of Lordship] emanate from Him and Him alone. Of course, this exclusivity is related to the Independent and Essential Lordship and not to lordship per se, for the Holy Qur'an has also acknowledged indirect lordships emanating from God and and affirmed the causes and intermediaries in the management of the universe. It has even sworn by the :managers of the affairs of the universe

( فَالْمُدَبِّرَٰتِ أَمْرًا )

(By those who direct the affairs [of creatures]!"(١"

### The Proofs of the Divine Unity in Lordship

(The concomitance between management (tadbīr) and creation (khalqiyyah .١

In terms of meaning and implication, management and creation are two different things, just as in terms of applicability regarding the human artifacts they can also be distinguished from each other. That is, it is possible for a person to cause something to exist and for another person to manage it, but this state of affairs is impossible with respect to the creation and management of the universe, for management of all .phenomena in the universe cannot persist and be sustained except through creation

For instance, managing the plant is done in such a way that it is constantly provided with air, heat and other elements of subsistence and the process of life's growth continues. In reality, they are manifestations of the Divine creation which is reflected ,in the law of nature. As such



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.Sūrat al-Nāzi'āt ٧٩:٥ -١

the Holy Qur'an has mentioned creation and management together. We shall mention here some examples of such verses:

( أَلا لَهُ الْخَلْقُ وَالأمْرُ تَبارَكَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعالَمِينَ )

"Look! All creation and command belong to Him. Blessed is Allah, the Lord of all the worlds."(1)

( رَبُّنَا الَّذِی أَعْطَى كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلْقَهُ ثُمَّ هَدَى )

"Our Lord is He who gave everything its creation and then guided it."(2)

( سَبِّحِ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الأعْلَى  الَّذِی خَلَقَ فَسَوَّى  وَالَّذِی قَدَّرَ فَهَدَى )

"Celebrate the Name of your Lord, the Most Exalted, who created and proportioned, who determined and guided."(3)

2. Harmony and concordance in the creation and management

Harmony and concordance in the natural phenomena is something indisputable from the perspective of casual observations and scientific studies. On the other hand, the involvement of two independent entities in the creation and management of the universe necessitates chaos and disorder in the order of nature. In view of these two premises, it can be proved that the manager and controller of the universe is One. The following holy verse supports this argument:

( لَوْ كَانَ فِيهِمَا آلِهَةٌ إِلا اللَّهُ لَفَسَدَتَا )

"Had there been gods in them other than Allah, they would surely have fallen apart."(4)

Hishām ibn al-Ḥakam asked Imām al-Ṣādiq ('a) about the proof of the Oneness of God. The Imām ('a) replied, thus:

إتِّصالُ التَّدْبيرِ وَتَمامُ الصُّنْعِ.

"The cohesion of the management and the harmony of creation [is the proof of the

(Oneness of God].”(۵)

.The Imām (‘a) then recited the holy verse quoted above

### Human Being’s Deviation Relative to the Divine Unity in Lordship

It can be inferred from a study of



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۱- Sūrat al-A‘rāf ۷:۵۱.

۲- Sūrat Ṭā Ḥā ۲۰:۵۰.

۳- Sūrat al-A‘lā ۸۷:۱-۳.

۴- Sūrat al-Anbiyā’ ۲۱:۲۲.

۵- Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, Al-Tawḥīd, section (bāb) ۳۶, ḥadīths ۱-۲.

the history of religions that many deviations have been made relative to the Divine Unity (tawḥīd) in Lordship (rubūbiyyah) – be it cosmic or legislative Lordship. The Holy Qur’an which is the most reliable source in this regard has mentioned examples of polytheism in Lordship. Among them are the verses which give the account of Prophet Ibrāhīm’s (Abraham) (‘a) debate with the polytheists of his time. It can be deduced from the said verses that they believed in the lordship of the sun and the moon.(1)

Prophet Yūsuf (Joseph) (‘a) is also quoted in the Qur’an, addressing his two companions in prison, thus:

( يَا صَاحِبَيِ السِّجْنِ أَأَرْبَابٌ مُتَفَرِّقُونَ خَيْرٌ أَمِ اللَّهُ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ )

“O my prison mates! Are different masters better, or Allah, the One, the All-paramount?”(2)

And Pharaoh is also quoted to have said, thus:

( أَنَا رَبُّكُمُ الأَعْلَى )

“I am your exalted lord!”(3)

It also says about the polytheists during the time of the Holy Prophet (ṣ):

( وَاتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ آلِهَةً لِيَكُونُوا لَهُمْ عِزًّا )

“They have taken gods besides Allah that they may be a [source of] might to them.”(4)

Based on historical accounts, the polytheists used to regard their idols as different manifestations of the natural forces, worshipping them in a bid to benefit from these forces or to be immune from the threat and danger they brought. For instance, Ba‘l was supposed to be the embodiment of soul, fountains and underground water sources. Worship of the jinn was also prevalent among them and they usually took refuge in the goddess

۱- Sūrat al-An‘ām ۶:۷۶-۷۸.

۲- Sūrat Yūsuf ۱۲:۳۹.

۳- Sūrat al-Nāzi‘āt ۷۹:۲۴.

۴- Sūrat Maryam ۱۹:۸۱.

(of the jinn in horrifying deserts.(1)

The same point can also be deduced from an account of the beginning of idol-worship in the Arabian Peninsula, for in one of his travels to Shām,(2) 'Amr ibn Laḥī observed that the people there used to worship idols. He asked them about their motive in worshipping idols. They told him that they were doing so with the aim of seeking the idols' help in solving their problems. 'Amr was convinced of their practice and brought idols with him upon his return to Makkah. He then named one of these idols as Hubal (and put it on top of the Ka'bah and called upon the people to worship it.(3)

It is worth mentioning that it is pointed out in some verses of the Qur'an that the polytheists during the time of the Prophet (ṣ) only believed in God's Lordship and Management of the universe,(4) but in view of the earlier quoted verses and historical evidences, it must be said that the management of the entire universe and the important and basic issues of Lordship was considered exclusive to God. On issues, however, like victory, success and warding off undesirable things related to the individual and social life, they only believed in the lordship of gods and goddesses, and (thus, they were polytheists.(5)

### The Divine Unity in Legislation

One of the manifestations and expressions of the Divine Unity in Lordship is Oneness :in legislation and law-making. The Holy Qur'an says

( إِنِ الْحُكْمُ إِلا لِلَّهِ أَمَرَ أَلّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلا إِيَّاهُ )

Sovereignty belongs only to"



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.Jihān dar 'Aṣr-e Bi'thah (The World during the Prophet's Mission), p. ۲۱ -۱
Shām: the land that included today's Syria, Lebanon and parts of Jordan and - ۲ [.Palestine up until five centuries ago. [Trans
.Ibn Hishām, Al-Sīrat al-Nabawiyyah, vol. ۱, p. ۷۹ -۳
.Sūrat Yūnus ۱۰:۳۱; Sūrat al-'Ankabūt ۲۹:۶۳; Sūrat al-Mu'minūn ۲۳:۸۶-۸۹ -۴

.Sayyid Muḥsin Amīn, Kashf al-Irtiyāb, p. ١٧٠ -٥

(Allah. He has commanded you to worship none except Him."(1)

Since legislation and determining the duties of individuals is a kind of guardianship (wilāyah) on them and interference in their affairs and that the guardianship and involvement in the affairs of the universe (including the human beings and others) is exclusive to God on the basis of the Divine Unity in Lordship, no one except Him has the right of legislation and determining the rights and duties of others. One the other hand, what shall be enacted as laws in the legislative houses are actually declarations of the practical and executive ways of realizing the Divine laws and decrees.

For this reason, these laws must be harmonious with the Islamic laws and decrees without any conflict with them; otherwise, they shall be devoid of legitimacy.

### The Divine Unity in Sovereignty

The right of sovereignty is primarily and essentially exclusive to God, for sovereignty is a kind of guardianship and management which is peculiar to God alone. On the other hand, governance is one of the social needs of the human being and its realization depends on his sovereignty and domination.

The outcome of these two principles is that some individuals are granted the right of sovereignty by God so as to assume the leadership in society and exercise the right of sovereignty by observing the rational and legislative principles and rules. There is no dispute that the prophets of God ('a), in general, and the Holy Prophet (ṣ), in particular, have enjoyed such a station.

From the



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١- Sūrat Yūsuf ١٢:٣٩.

Shīʿah point of view, after the Holy Prophet (ṣ) this station has been entrusted to his infallible successors, viz. the Imāms from the Ahl al-Bayt (ʿa), just as it was during the Period of Occultation (ghaybah), the just, pious and competent jurists (fuqahā) also have such a right. In other words, the system of government in Islam is founded on the concept of guardianship (wilāyah) and the guardianship of the prophets, the Imāms and the jurists is a manifestation and expression of it.(١)

We will deal again with this issue in the discussions on Imamate.

#### The Divine Unity in Obedience

The right to earn obedience (iṭāʿah) is primarily and essentially exclusive to God, for He is the Creator and Master of the universe and the human beings. For this reason, obedience to God – so is servitude (ʿubūdiyyah) to Him – is necessary for all beings. Meanwhile, God's bestowal of the right of sovereignty and leadership on specific individuals (the prophets and the like) necessitates that obedience to them is also essential for others; otherwise, their guardianship and leadership shall be void and useless in practice.

The way of reconciling the two is to argue that obedience to other than God per se is not obligatory on anyone, but obedience to those who are granted guardianship by God on the human beings is obligatory on others by the decree and commandment of God, as it is thus said:

( يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ أَطِيعُواْ اللّهَ وَأَطِيعُواْ الرَّسُولَ وَأُوْلِي الأَمْرِ مِنكُمْ )

"O you who have faith! Obey Allah



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١- For further information, see the book Dīn wa Dawlat (Religion and Government) by the author.

(and obey the Apostle and those vested with authority among you.”(1)

:And it is also stated, thus

( وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلا لِيُطَاعَ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ )

(We did not send any apostle but to be obeyed by Allah’s leave.”(2)“

It is worth mentioning that the manifestations and expressions of the Divine Unity in Lordship and Management are not limited to the abovementioned cases, and they are only mentioned because of their particular importance in the social life of the human .beings

## Review Questions

1. State the meanings and types of lordship (rubūbiyyah).
2. Is the Lordship of God limited only to this world? Explain why.
3. State the proofs of the Divine Unity in Lordship while taking into account the verses of the Holy Qur’an.
4. By taking into account the verses of the Holy Qur’an, explain human beings’ deviation relative to the Divine Unity in Lordship.
5. Explain the Divine Unity in legislation.
6. Explain the Divine Unity in sovereignty.
7. Explain the Divine Unity in obedience while keeping in view of the verses of the Holy Qur’an.

## Lesson 11: The Divine Unity in Worship

### point

Calling to the worship (‘ibādah) of One and Only God and abandoning the worship of false deities is one of the most important objectives of all the prophets of God (‘a), as

:the Holy Qur’an thus says

( وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِى كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَّسُولاً أَنِ اعْبُدُواْ اللّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُواْ الطَّاغُوتَ )

Certainly We raised an apostle in every nation [to preach:] ‘Worship Allah, and keep“ (away from the Rebel’.”(٣

The Muslim schools of thought have a consensus of opinion on worship as exclusive to ,God alone



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.Sūrat al-Nisā’ ۴:۵۹ -١

.Sūrat al-Nisā’ ۴:۶۴ -٢

.Sūrat an-Naḥl ١۶:٣۶ -٣

but some sects (such as the Wahhābīs) have committed mistakes in interpreting worship. As a result, they mistakenly regard many practices of Muslim as a gesture of honor and respect to the prophets and righteous people as worshipping them and (polytheism in worship (shirk fī 'l-'ibādah.

So, by referring to the Holy Qur'an, it is necessary for us to know the true meaning of worship. Regarding the issue of the Divine Unity (tawḥīd) in worship, the Holy Qur'an has focused on the following concepts:

١. Godhood or Divinity (ulūhiyyah);

٢. Mastership or Ownership (mālikiyyah);

٣. Creatorship (khāliqiyyah); and

۴. Lordship (rubūbiyyah).

That is, only the Being who possesses the abovementioned Attributes is worthy of worship, and since the said Attributes can only be found in God, it follows that worship is due to Him alone, and now we shall quote examples of Qur'anic verses in this regard:

١. Sūrat al-Fātiḥah first mentions the Lordship and Mastership of God and then declares that worship is exclusive to God alone:

(الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ  الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ  إِيَّاکَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاکَ نَسْتَعِينُ)

"All praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful, Master of the Day of Retribution. You [alone] do we worship, and to You [alone] do we turn for help."(١)

٢. In a universal invitation, the human beings have been summoned to the worship of God who has created all the human beings:

(يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِى خَلَقَكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ)

O mankind! Worship your Lord, who“

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.Sūrat al-Fātiḥah ۱:۲-۵ -۱

(created you and those who were before you.”(١

The apostles and prophets of God (‘a) are reminded that Godhood (ulūhiyyah) is .٣
:exclusive to God alone. For this reason, they must worship Him alone

( وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِکَ مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلا نُوحِی إِلَیْهِ أَنَّهُ لا إِلَهَ إِلا أَنَا فَاعْبُدُونِ )

We did not send any apostle before you but We revealed to him that ‘There is no god“
(except Me; so worship Me.”(٢

In another place, by citing that the Lordship (rubūbiyyah), Godhood (ulūhiyyah) and .۴
Creatorship (khāliqiyyah) exclusively belong to God, all the human beings are invited
:[to worship Him [alone

( ذلِکُمُ اللّهُ رَبُّکُمْ لا إِلهَ إِلاّ هُوَ خالِقُ کُلِّ ِشَیْ ءٍ فَاعْبُدُوهُ )

That is Allah, your Lord, there is no god except Him, the creator of all things; so“
(worship Him.”(٣

:Addressing the Holy Prophet (ṣ), it is thus stated in another verse .۵

( وَلِلَّهِ غَیْبُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأرْضِ وَإِلَیْهِ یُرْجَعُ الأمْرُ کُلُّهُ فَاعْبُدْهُ )

To Allah belongs the Unseen of the heavens and the earth, and to Him all matters are“
(returned. So worship Him.”(۴

In many verses, the idol-worshippers have been reproached for worshipping .۶
:objects which cannot give them neither harm nor benefit

( قُلْ أَتَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لا یَمْلِکُ لَکُمْ ضَرًّا وَلا نَفْعًا )

Say, ‘Do you worship, besides Allah, what has no power to bring you any benefit or“
(harm?”(۵

( وَیَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لا یَضُرُّهُمْ وَلا یَنْفَعُهُمْ )

They worship besides Allah that which neither causes them any harm, not brings“

(them any benefit."(۶

( وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لا

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۱- ۲:۲۱ Sūrat al-Baqarah.

۲- ۲۱:۲۵ Sūrat al-Anbiyā' .

۳- ۶:۱۰۲ Sūrat al-An'ām.

۴- ۱۱:۱۲۳ Sūrat Hūd.

۵- ۵:۷۶ Sūrat al-Mā'idah.

۶- ۱۰:۱۸ Sūrat Yūnus.

يَمْلِكُ لَهُمْ رِزْقًا )

(They worship besides Allah what has no power to provide them.”(١“

( إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ لا يَمْلِكُونَ لَكُمْ رِزْقًا )

Indeed those whom you worship besides Allah have no control over your“ (provision.”(٢

**?What is Worship**

By studying the totality of the quoted verses, the meaning of worship (‘ibādah) can be inferred; that worship means any word or gesture of humility and humbleness before :a being that is believed to have possessed all or some of the following characteristics

;He is Independent and Self-sufficient in His existence and existential perfections .١

He is the Creator and Originator of all human beings and the universe, and all other .٢ ;creatures

He controls anything and anyone what or who brings benefit and harm to the .٣ human beings and other creatures; and

He has direct and total involvement or interference in the destiny of the human .۴ being and the universe, and He occupies the station of [Exclusive] Lordship [over the .[entire Creation

Therefore, the meaning of worship is constituted by two elements, viz. belief and .action

Belief is related to one of the abovementioned characteristics while action refers to any gesture coupled with humility and humbleness, but mere belief or action cannot .’constitute what is called ‘worship

In addition to the fact that this point can clearly be established by studying the verses :quoted above, other proofs and pieces of evidence also indicate the same

If we say that every gesture of humility before others – though not coupled with the .۱
– belief in their Creatorship or Lordship

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.Sūrat al-Naḥl ۱۶:۷۳ -۱

.Sūrat al-'Ankabūt ۲۹:۱۷ -۲

is considered ‘worship’, we must declare that the child’s meekness in front of her parents, the student’s humility before his teacher, the young’s show of respect to an elder, the ignorant’s humbleness toward the learned, and the like are all examples of worship. As a result, doing these gestures is an act of polytheism in worship although all these actions are encouraged and appreciated by the religious law and reason. Meanwhile, polytheism is essentially evil and knows no exception. For instance, the Qur’an has described it as a great injustice (ẓulmun ‘aẓīm),(۱) and injustice is essentially evil.

۲. Prostration (sajdah) in front of others is regarded as the ultimate stage of actual humility, yet as stated in the Qur’an the angels were ordered to prostrate before Prophet Ādam (‘a),(۲) and Prophet Ya‘qūb (Jacob) (‘a) and his wife and children prostrated before Prophet Yūsuf (Joseph) (‘a).(۳) If humility without the belief in Godhood is an act of worship, it follows that the action of the angels, Prophet Ya‘qūb (‘a) and his children are clear manifestations of polytheism in worship.

۳. In principle, it must be stated that humility of an imperfect being in front of a perfect being is one of the universal precedents (sunan) governing the creation. Whenever an entity feels a sense of weakness and inferiority toward another entity that is considered stronger and more perfect, he/it impulsively feels a sense of humbleness and humility toward the other entity.

۴. Then, in order to benefit from the said perfection and power



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۱- Sūrat Luqmān ۳۱:۱۳.

۲- “And when We said to the angels, ‘Prostrate before Adam,’ they prostrated, except Iblis: he refused and acted arrogantly.” (Sūrat al-Baqarah ۲:۳۴)

۳- “And he seated his parents high upon the throne, and they fell down prostrate before him.” (Sūrat Yūsuf ۱۲:۱۰۰)

or to be immune from any harm to be brought by the other entity, through a suitable gesture, he/it would express his/its humility and humbleness. The humility and modesty of an ignorant person in front of a learned person, a learned person in front of a more learned person is among the many manifestations of the said innate humility, and as such, reason ('aql) and natural disposition (fiṭrah) regard it as something laudable, although the agent may be totally unaware of whether or not .this action earns the approval and pleasure of the Law-giver

Therefore, once humility and lowliness is expressed on account of a perfection which exists in another entity, we cannot consider it blameworthy and objectionable; in fact, .such an action is rationally and religiously laudable

It is very well acknowledged that expressing humility in front of another person is not :permissible in two instances

١. The person to whom humility is expressed is devoid of the perceived perfection for which humility is expressed. It is like the case of someone who expresses humility in front of another person, thinking that the latter person is learned or more learned than the former. In this case, what may be inadmissible would be the action and not the agent, because the motive of the agent in doing so is desirable. Similar is the case of someone who fasts on the day of 'Īd al-Fiṭr,(١) thinking that it is the last day of the month of Ramaḍān. Although fasting on that day is blameworthy



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١- Īd al-Fiṭr: the Islamic feast marking the end of the fasting month of Ramaḍān. [Trans.]

and prohibited from the perspective of religious law, this kind of undue expression of obedience cannot be treated as 'worship'.

۲. The said being possesses the intended existential perfection but not as independent and intrinsic in nature, as in the case of all beings in the universe. Now, if someone regards that existential perfection as inherent in a being and independently his/its own and in spite of knowing that such being is created by God and is in need of his Creator in many of his existential perfections, he still believes that some of the existential attributes and effects are delegated to that being, and therefore, that being acts independently of those aspects. In this case that person worships that being in view such belief he holds and expresses humility and lowliness in front of that being. This kind of humility or worship is not only inappropriate and blameworthy but also an act of polytheism.

At any rate, this conceptual analysis arrives at the same conclusion from a study of Qur'anic verses, and thus, the essence of worship is constituted by two elements. One is belief and intention while the other is actual humility and lowliness (belief and action).

### The Wahhābīs and Polytheism in Worship

It becomes clear from the abovementioned points that the scope of polytheism in worship (manifest polytheism and not the other levels of polytheism) is so restricted and it has two types: one is the practical aspect while the other is the ideological aspect. That is, the expression of humility and lowliness in front

of any being other than God – in whatever manner – coupled with the belief in his/its .Godhood and Lordship

The Wahhābīs(۱) have taken a very broad scope of polytheism, particularly in worship. According to them, any kind of humility or humbleness expressed in front of any being other than God is considered polytheism, particularly in worship. They cite two sets of Qur'anic verses to support this point. One set refers to the verses that refer to the polytheism, particularly in worship, committed by the polytheists during the time of .(Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ

In these verses, actions such as supplication, seeking intercession (shafā'ah) and worshipping the idols with the intention of seeking nearness (qurb) to God have been regarded by them, the Wahhābīs, as examples of polytheism in worship. Another set refers to the verses which indicate that the polytheists during the time of Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ) had acknowledged the Divine Unity in Creatorship and Lordship. From .this perspective, therefore, they were monotheists and not polytheists

What can be concluded from these two sets of verses is that polytheism in worship has nothing to do with the belief in the Lordship and Mastership of the Object of Worship (ma'būd); it is rather concerned with the performance of actions which are themselves considered acts of worship, and since worship is exclusive to God, performing those practices toward any being other than God constitutes polytheism in worship. This is the most important basis of the Wahhābīs in regarding as polytheists all other Muslims



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Wahhābī: follower of Muḥammad ibn 'Abdul-Wahhāb, the founder of the Wahhābī -۱ sect. For a critical review of Wahhabism, see Āyatullāh Ja'far Ṣubḥānī, Wahhabism (Tehran: Naba' Organization, ۱۹۹۶), http://www.al-islam.org/wahhabism; [۱۳] Hamid Algar, Wahhabism: A Critical Essay (New York: Islamic Publications International, ۲۰۰۲). [.[Trans

.and recognizing themselves as monotheists (muwaḥḥid) with respect to worship

Considering what we have stated in the discussion related to the Divine Unity in Lordship, the incorrectness of this basis is manifest, for the polytheists during the time of Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ) used to worship idols and other deities and their motive behind those acts of worship was to seek proximity to God and winning the intercession of the deities before God, as declared by the Qur'an, thus:

( وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لا يَضُرُّهُمْ وَلا يَنْفَعُهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ هَؤُلاءِ شُفَعَاؤُنَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ )

"They worship besides Allah that which neither causes them any harm, not brings them any benefit, and they say, 'These are our intercessors with Allah.'"(١)

:And it also says, thus

( وَالَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ مَا نَعْبُدُهُمْ إِلا لِيُقَرِّبُونَا إِلَى اللَّهِ زُلْفَى )

"...and those who take guardians besides Him [claiming,] 'We only worship them so that they may bring us near to Allah'."(٢)

The polytheists (during the Age of Ignorance) supposed that since the Divine Essence is unfathomable and one cannot comprehend the truth of His Essence, worshipping Him directly without any intermediary is not possible. For this reason, they used to worship other beings such as angels, deceased pious people and other creatures whom and which they believed to have some influence on the destiny of man and the universe. By doing so, they were expecting to gain the intercession of their objects of worship and thus attaining comfort in life, and to get nearness to the Lord of lords

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١- Sūrat Yūnus ١٠:١٨.

٢- Sūrat al-Zumar ٣٩:٣.

.(rabb al-arbāb)

Accordingly, the idols made of wood or stone were in reality representations of those deities and objects of worship, although those deities and objects of worship were gradually forgotten in the public memory and the idols became the real deities and .objects of worship

In any case, they used to worship their idols and objectes of worship, and as declared in the previous discussion, belief in the Lordship and Mastership of the Object of Worship is implied in the meaning of worship. This is so while none of the Muslims observes the rites and ceremonies which are performed for the sake of saints (awliyā') with the intention of worshipping them. They recognize God alone as the only .One worthy of worship and they worship Him alone

They observe these rites and ceremonies with the intention of honor and reverence to the sublime station of the saints who enjoy the special favor of God, and in reality, this in itself is a sort of worship to God, just as some Wahhābī scholars have interpreted worship ('ibādah) to mean the performance of any action (verbal or bodily) which earns the good pleasure of God and has been enjoined by the Qur'an (and the Prophet (ṣ): (١)

أَلعِبادَةُ إِسْمٌ جامِعٌ لِكُلِّ ما يُحِبُّهُ اللهُ وَيَرْضاهُ مِنْ أقْوالِ العِبادِ وَأفْعالِهِم مِمّا أمَرَهُمْ بِهِ فی كِتابِهِ عَلیٰ لِسانِ رَسولِهِ.

There is no doubt that showing honor and respect to the prophets and saints of God ('a) by means of any action which is permissible and not



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Al-Jāmi' al-Farīd, p. ٢٩٠, quoting the book Al-Kalimāt al-Nāfi'ah written by 'Abd Allāh -١ .ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb

prohibited by the religious law earns the pleasure of God, and it is one of the manifestations of honoring the Divine sacraments (sha'ā'ir Allāh), and the Qur'an :regards it as an indication of the purity of hearts, saying thus

( وَ مَنْ يُعَظِّمْ شَعَائِرَ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّهَا مِنْ تَقْوَى الْقُلُوبِ )

And whoever venerates the sacraments of Allah—indeed that arises from God-" (wariness of hearts."(1)

Therefore, comparing the practices of Muslims with respect to the practices which are observed for the sake of honoring the sublime station of the holy saints (awliyā') with the intention of worshipping God and not worshipping the saints, with the practices of the polytheists with respect to their idols and objects of worship which are done with .the intention of worshipping them is totally incorrect and baseless

If we are supposed to compare the Muslims' visitation to the graves of pious people to something else, we must do so with the rites pertaining to the visitation to the House of God (Ka'bah), in general, and the kissing of the Black Stone (ḥajar al-aswad), in particular, which are done with no intention other than worshipping God and .honoring the Divine sacraments

At this juncture, one can know the refutation to all the Wahhābī objections to the other Muslim schools of thought with respect to the Divine Unity in worship. They regard as manifestations of polytheism in worship such practices as entreating (tabarruk) and imploring (istighāthah) the saints of God (awliyā'), seeking their intercession (tawassul), swearing to God by their right, seeking



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.Sūrat al-Ḥajj ٢٢:٣٢ -١

blessings (tabarruk) from their remnants, making a vow (nadhr) for the buried ones (ahl al-qubūr), and the like.

And their basis is nothing but comparison of these practices to the practices of the polytheists during the time of Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ) which are outwardly similar to each other. This is exactly their error because outward similarity of two actions can never be the basis of uniformity of religious ruling for both actions; otherwise, fighting and struggle in the way of God and in the way of ṭāghūt(١) must have the same religious ruling, for they are the same outwardly and their only difference is in the intention or motive, as the Qur'an testifies, thus:

(الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يُقَاتِلُونَ فِی سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُقَاتِلُونَ فِی سَبِيلِ الطَّاغُوتِ)

"Those who have faith fight in the way of Allah, and those who are faithless fight in the way of the Rebel"(٢)

The practices of the polytheists with respect to their objects of worship are coupled with the belief in the Lordship and Mastership of their objects of worship and the intention of worshipping them, while the practices of the Muslims in relation to the saints of God and their graves are in no way coupled with the belief in their Lordship and Mastership and the motive is to worship God through giving respect and honor to them as Divine sacraments – something which is acceptable and pleasing to God.

#### Review Questions

١. Concerning the issue of the Divine Unity (tawḥīd) in worship, what are the points emphasized



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١- The term ṭāghūt, which has been used eight times in the Qur'an, applies to any idol, object, or individual that prevents people from doing what is good, and leads them astray. Prior to Islam, ṭāghūt had been the name of one of the idols of the Quraysh tribe. This name is also used to mean Satan. Moreover, the term is attributed to the one who rebels against lofty values, or whose despotism surpasses all bounds and

[.who claims the prerogatives of divinity for himself either explicitly or implicitly. [Trans

.Sūrat al-Nisā’ ۴:۷۶ -۲

?by the Holy Qur’an

.Elucidate the two elements that constitute the essence of worship .۲

In what way will humility and lowliness in front of any being other than God become .۳ ?laudable and in what way will the same become blameworthy and unacceptable

Why do the Wahhābīs regard any gesture of humility and humbleness in front of .۴ ?any being other than God as polytheism

.Write down the invalidity of the Wahhābī view on the Divine Unity in worship .۵

Are entreating (tawassul) and imploring (istighāthah) the saints of God (awliyā’) in .۶ ?conflict with the Divine Unity (tawḥīd)? Why

## Lesson ۱۲: The Attributes of God

### (Name (ism) and Attribute (ṣifah

The word ism has different applications. In its broadest function, it means any word which implies certain meanings. In this application, ism is synonymous with kalimah (word) and it also includes ḥarf (particle) and fi‘l (verb) in the parlance of the Arabic .grammarians

The second application of ism is that which is used in Arabic syntax, and it is one of the .types of kalimah, ḥarf and fi‘l being the other types

Its third application is that which is intended in the parlance of the theologians (mutakallimūn) and it means any word which indicates the very quiddity (māhiyyah) or essence (dhāt) of an attribute (ṣifah) without considering its qualification (ittiṣāf); .(examples are the words samā’ (heaven), arḍ (earth), rajul (man), and jidār (wall

The word ṣifah has also different applications. The theosophers (ḥukamā’) call the origins of derivatives (mushtaqqāt) as ṣifah and the derivatives as ism. According to them, ‘ilm (knowledge) and qudrah (power) are

ṣifah while ‘ālim or ‘alīm (knowledgeable) and qādir or qadīr (powerful) are ism. Meanwhile, the theologians call the derivatives as ṣifāt (ṣifahs or attributes) and the origins of derivatives as ma‘nā (concepts). For this matter, ‘ilm and qudrah are ma‘nā while ‘ālim or ‘alīm and qādir or qadīr are ṣifāt. In other words, whenever we take into consideration the essence or quiddity in the sense that it is qualified by a specific quality (waṣf) or meaning, the word ṣifah is used.(1)

اَلصِّفَةُ هِيَ الإسْمُ الدّالُّ عَلَى بَعْضِ أحْوالِ الذّاتِ، وَ ذلِكَ نَحْوَ طَويلٍ وَ قَصيرٍ وَ عاقِلٍ وَ غَيْرِها.

“Ṣifah (attribute) is an ism (noun) which indicates some states of the dhāt (essence), in the case of ṭawīl (long), qaṣīr (short), ‘āqil (intelligent), and the like.”(2)

إنَّ الصِّفَةَ فِي الْحَقيقَةِ ما أنْبَأَتْ عَنْ مَعْنى مُسْتَفادٍ يَخُصُّ المَوْصوفَ وَ ما شارَكَهُ...

“In reality, ṣifah refers to the meaning which is exclusive to the qualified (mawṣūf) and what shares with it [in the said description (waṣf)].”(3)

It must be noted that such technicalities are not much observed in practice, and they (ism and ṣifah) are used interchangeably.

The only word which has no descriptive meaning and is known as the exclusive Name of God is His Name of Glory (ism jalāluh), i.e. Allāh, whereas other words such as Al-‘ālim (the All-learned), Al-qādir (the All-powerful), Al-ḥayy (the Ever-living), Al-rāziq (the Sustainer), Al-bāqī (the Everlasting), and the like are used both as Names and Attributes of God. For instance, in well-known traditions (aḥādīth), it is said that God has



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۱- Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, Sharḥ Asmā’ Allāh al-Ḥusnā, p. ۲۷.

۲- Sayyid Sharīf Gurgānī, Al-Ta‘rīfāt, p. ۹۵.

۳- Shaykh al-Mufīd, Awā’il al-Maqālāt, p. ۶۱.

Ninety-nine Names. With the exception of His Name of Glory, all are derivatives and .attributes

## Classifications of the Divine Attributes

### point

:The Attributes (ṣifāt) of Allah are classified in various ways

### The Attributes of Beauty and the Attributes of Glory .١

The Attributes of Beauty (ṣifāt al-jamāliyyah) or the Positive Attributes (ṣifāt al-thubūtiyyah) are attributes which indicate the Perfect Being of God; examples are ‘ilm (knowledge) and Al-‘ālim (the All-knowing), qudrah (power) and Al-qādir (the All-powerful), khalq (creation) and Al-khāliq (the Creator), rizq (sustenance) and Al-rāziq (the Sustainer), and the like. The Attributes of Glory (ṣifāt al-jalāliyyah) or the Negative Attributes (ṣifāt al-salabiyyah) are attributes which indicate deficiency and lack of perfection and are thus negated from God. Examples are compositeness (tarkīb), corporeality (jasmāniyyah), space (makān), direction (jahat), oppression :(ẓulm), absurdity (‘abath), and the like. In this regard, Ṣadr al-Muta’allihīn comments

These two terms (the Attributes of Beauty and Glory) are consistent with the“ expression dhū ’l-jalāli wa ’l-ikrām (the Majestic and the Munificent) in the holy verse, “Blessed is the Name of your Lord, the Majestic and the Munificent!”(١) for the Attributes of Glory (ṣifāt al-jalāl) are those attributes which make the Essence of God immune from similarities with others. And the Attributes of Munificence (ṣifāt al-akrām) are those with which the Essence of God is adorned. Thus, God is described with the Attributes of Perfection, and immune from deficiency with the Attributes of (Glory.”(٢

The Negative Attributes have another function, and that is, they are attributes which indicate God’s negation of deficiency; for example, Al-ghanī (the Self-sufficient), Al-,(wāḥid (the One), Al-quddūs (the All-holy), Al-ḥamīd (the Praiseworthy

۱- [Trans.] Sūrat al-Raḥmān ۵۵:۷۸.

۲- Ṣadr al-Muta’allihīn, Al-Asfār al-Arba‘ah, vol. ۶, p. ۱۸.

(and the like.(1)

### 2. The Attributes of Essence and the Attributes of Action

In dividing the Divine Attributes into the Attributes of Essence and the Attributes of Action, there are two terminologies and two views involved:

1. In abstracting an attribute from the Divine Essence or describing the Divine Essence with that attribute, whenever conception (taṣawwur) of the Essence is sufficient and there is no need for any conception of God's agency (fā'iliyyah), the said attribute is an Attribute of Essence or Essential Attribute; examples are ḥayāh (life) and Al-hayy (the Ever-living), irādah (will) and murīd (the Willing), 'ilm (knowledge) and Al-'ālim (the All-knowing), qudrah (Power) and Al-qādir (the All-powerful). And whenever conception of God's agency is needed [in abstracting an attribute], that attribute is called an Attribute of Action or Agency Attribute; examples are khalq (creation) and Al-khāliq (the Creator), rizq (sustenance) and Al-rāziq (the Sustenainer), amātah (death) and Al-mumayyit (the Life-taker), aḥyā' (living) and Al-muḥayyī (the Life-giver), maghfirah (forgiveness) and Al-ghāfir (the Forgiver), intiqām (vengeance) and Al-muntaqim (the Avenger), and the like.

2. Whenever the opposite or reverse of an attribute can be attributed to God, it is called an Attribute of Action and whenever the opposite or reverse of an attribute cannot be attributed to God, it is called an Attribute of Essence. Therefore, power, knowledge and life are among the Attributes of the Divine Essence, because God cannot be described with the opposites of these attributes as their opposites denote existential deficiency. But will (irādah) is not one of the Attributes of Essence because describing God with its



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1- Amīn al-Islām al-Ṭabarsī, Majma' al-Bayān, vol. 3, p. 503.

opposite is not possible. For instance, it can be said that God does not will any form of :injustice toward His servants

( وَمَا اللَّهُ يُرِيدُ ظُلْمًا لِلْعِبَادِ )

(And Allah does not desire any wrong for (His) servants."(١)"

On this basis, justice ('adl) is one of the Attributes of the Divine Essence but according .to the first terminology, it is one of the Attributes of Action

Of the two stated terminologies, the first is more popular and prevalent in the books of philosophy and theology. In his Al-Kāfī, Muḥaddith al-Kulaynī has adopted the (second terminology.(٢

The traditions which have regarded irādah (will or willpower) as one of the Attributes of the Divine Action have been interpreted on this basis. Sayyid Sharīf al-Gurgānī has (also adopted this terminology in his Al-Ta'rīfāt.(٣

### The Real and the Relative Attributes .٣

The Attributes of Essence have been divided into Real (ḥaqīqī) and Relative (iḍāfī) Attributes. A Real Essential Attribute is that which can really be ascribed to the Divine Essence; for example, knowledge and power. A Relative Essential Attribute is that which can be abstracted from the Real Attributes, but it is in itself not really one of the Attributes of Essence; for example, the attributes of 'ālimiyyah (the state of being the All-knowing) and qādiriyyah (the state of being the All-powerful) which can be abstracted by taking into account the relation of knowledge and power to the Essence, and they have no reality beyond the Essence and the attributes of .knowledge and power

(The Real Essential Attributes are divided into the Purely Real (ḥaqīqī-ye maḥḍ



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١- Sūrat Ghāfir (or al-Mu'min) ٤٠:٣١.

٢- Muḥaddith al-Kulaynī, Uṣūl al-Kāfī, vol. ١, section (bāb) on willpower (irādah), p. ٨۶.
٣- Sayyid Sharīf al-Gurgānī, Al-Ta‘rifāt, p. ٩۵.

and the Relationally Essential Real (ḥaqīqī-ye dhāt al-iḍāfah). The Purely Real is that which pertains to no other than God; for example, the attribute of life. The Relationally Essential Real is that which can also be applied to other than God; for example, knowledge and power.

### ۴. The Transmitted Attributes

Some attributes are called the Transmitted Attributes (ṣifāt al-khabariyyah).(۱) They are the attributes which have been transmitted in the Heavenly Account (the Qur'an and the Sunnah), and if they were not mentioned in the Heavenly Account, they could not have been established for God in a rational discourse. Meanwhile, if we subscribe to their outward meaning, it will be tantamount to [the belief in] anthropomorphism (tashbiyyah) and incarnation (tajassum).

In other words, such attributes are Attributes which are mentioned in allegorical Qur'anic verses and traditions about the Divine Attributes; for example, wajh (face), yadd (hand), istiwā' (to settle) and mujī' (advent) which are mentioned in the following verses:

( كُلُّ شَيْءٍ هَالِكٌ إِلَّا وَجْهَهُ )

"Everything is to perish except His Face."(۲)

( يَدُ اللَّهِ فَوْقَ أَيْدِيهِمْ )

"The hand of Allah is above their hands."(۳)

( الرَّحْمَنُ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ اسْتَوَى )

"The All-beneficent settled on the Throne."(۴)

( وَجَاءَ رَبُّكَ وَالْمَلَكُ صَفًّا صَفًّا )

"And your Lord and the angels arrive in ranks."(۵)

### Are the Names of Allah Tawqīfī?

The Names of Allah are said to be tawqīfī when we apply to God the Names and Attributes which are mentioned in the religious sources (the Qur'an and the Sunnah) and we do not apply other names and attributes. Most Sunnī theologians and some of their Shī'ah counterparts subscribe



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۱- 'Abd al-Karīm Shahristānī, Al-Milal wa 'n-Nihal, vol. ۱, p. ۹۲.

۲- Sūrat al-Qaṣaṣ ۲۸:۸۸.

۳- Sūrat al-Fatḥ ۴۸:۱۰.

۴- Sūrat Ṭā Hā ۲۰:۵.

۵- Sūrat al-Fajr ۸۹:۲۲.

to this view, but others do not believe in the Names and Attributes of God to be tawqīfī, considering it permissible to apply any name or attribute which denotes God’s existential perfection and does not ascribe any deficiency or fault to God.

Even in cases, therefore, where a name or attribute is mentioned in the Qur’an or traditions, yet its application to God without any qualification or indication bespeaks defect or fault, these are not permissible. For example, God is called zāri‘ (planter or grower) in this noble verse:

( أَأَنْتُمْ تَزْرَعُونَهُ أَمْ نَحْنُ الزَّارِعُونَ )

“Is it you who make it grow, or are We the grower?”(۱)

This indicates God as the Originator of plantation and not its conventional meaning in human usage. However, since the use of this term without any qualification or indication suggests its conventional meaning which is not suitable to God, it is not permissible to apply it to Him. On the other hand, the use of such terms as ‘the Necessary Being by essence’ (wājib al-wujūd bi ’dh-dhāt), ‘the Cause of causes’ (‘illat al-‘ilal) and the like which are terms in theosophy, is permissible as they indicate the sense of God’s perfection and negate any defect or fault in Him.

Here, one may demand for elaboration, and that is, if the application of a name or attribute to God is in the context of an intellectual discussion or discourse and not in supplication or any act of worship, the contention of those who deny God’s Names and Attributes



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۱- Sūrat al-Wāqi‘ah ۵۶:۶۴.

as being tawqīfī is valid. In the context of supplication and any similar act of worship, it is safer to use the Names and Attributes mentioned in the Qur'an, traditions and transmitted supplications. In this regard, the late 'Allāmah al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī has some :remarks which include the said elaboration

اَلإِحْتِياطُ فِى الـدِّينِ يَقْتَضـى الإِقْتِصارُ فِى التَّسْـمِيَهِ بِما وَرَدَ مِنْ طَريقِ السَّمْعِ، وَأَمّا مُجَرَّدُ الاِجْراءِ وِالإِطْلاقِ مِنْ دونِ التَّسْـمِيَهِ فَالْأَمْرُ فيهِ سَهْلٌ.

Precaution in religion necessitates restriction in calling [God] to that which is received" through transmission. However, if a name is applied to God without calling Him by it, (making decision in it is easy."(١

In another place, the 'Allāmah has regarded naming (tasmiyah) and calling (nidā') as (among the supplements of worship ('ibādah): (٢

وَالتَّسْمِيَهُ وَالنِّداءُ مِنْ لَواحِقِ الْعِبادَهِ.

At any rate, a reliable proof on the Names of Allah being tawqīfī has not been established. The main argument put forth by those who support that view is the noble :verse ١٨٠ of Sūrat al-A'rāf

( وَلِلَّهِ الأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَى فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا وَذَرُوا الَّذِينَ يُلْحِدُونَ فِى أَسْمَائِهِ سَيُجْزَوْنَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ )

To Allah belong the Best Names, so supplicate Him by them, and abandon those who" commit sacrilege in His names. Soon they shall be requited for what they used to (do."(٣

That the noble verse implies how the Names of Allah are tawqīfī depends on two things. One is that the letter lām in the phrase al-asmā' al-ḥusnā (the Best Names) is lām 'ahad; these are the Names which are mentioned in the Qur'an and



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.Al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān, vol. ٨, p. ٣۵۴ -١

.Ibid., p. ٣۴۵ -٢

.Sūrat al-A‘rāf ٧:١٨٠ -٣

the Prophetic traditions (aḥādīth). Another is that ilḥād means violation of those Names and applying other names to God although those names or attributes denote .perfection and do not imply any defect or fault

Yet, none of these two points has been proved because the function of the [definite article] al in the first case is absorption (istighrāq) and not 'ahad. And its purport in the holy verse is that all the names known to be the Best Names exclusively belong to God .because there is no being more perfect and superior to Him

In every sort of perfection, therefore, its highest level belongs to God and ilḥād (violation) here may possibly mean that the polytheists have committed sacrilege with regards to the Names of God and through a slight change of terminology, they would apply those Names to the idols. For example, they would change the word Allāh into Al-lāt and name one of their idols with it. They would alter the word Al-'aẓīz (the Most (High) into Al-'uzzā and call another of their idols with it.(١)

Another possibility of committing sacrilege against the Names of Allah is that some ignorant individuals would call God with names which are below His Sublime Stations; for example, invocative phrases such as Yā aba 'l-makārim (O father of generosities!) (and Yā abyaḍ al-wajh (O white-faced!).(٢)

**Review Questions**

.Write down the meanings and applications of ism and ṣifah .١

.Elucidate the Attributes of Beauty and Glory of God .٢

Write down the remarks of Ṣadr al-Muta'allihīn regarding the .٣



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.Ṭabarsī, Majma' al-Bayān, vol. ٣, p. ٥٠٣ -١

.Zamakhsharī, Al-Kashshāf, vol. ٢, p. ١٨٠ -٢

.Attributes of Beauty and Glory of God

Explain the two views regarding the division of the Divine Attributes into the . ۴ .Attributes of Essence and the Attributes of Action

.State the Real and Relative Attributes of God .۵

?(What is meant by the Declarative Attributes (ṣifāt al-khabariyyah .۶

.Explain how the Divine Names are being tawqīfī .۷

## Lesson ۱۳: The Knowledge of God

### point

Knowledge is one of the attributes of beauty and perfection, and there is no doubt at all that this attribute is confirmed for God. Muslim philosophers and theologians (nay, all theists) have a consensus of opinions on this issue, although there is a difference of .views and opinions on the quality and limits of the knowledge of God

.The knowledge of God can be discussed in three levels, viz

,God's knowledge of His Essence (۱)

God's knowledge of the creatures prior to their creation (knowledge about the (۲) things in the realm of essence, or essential knowledge), and

God's knowledge of the creatures after their being created (knowledge about the (۳) .(things in the realm of action, or active knowledge

### God's Knowledge of His Essence .۱

God's knowledge of His Essence is an intuitive knowledge or knowledge by presence ('ilm-e ḥuḍūrī); so is the human being's knowledge of himself. Basically, knowledge .(means the presence of the known (ma'lūm) before the knower ('ālim

If the creature is devoid of corporeality, the reality of that creature is undoubtedly present to himself, for that which hinders the presence of such a thing to himself is its

corporeality and changeability, and since God is free from

p: ۱۱۶

corporeality and changeability, His Essence is present in Himself and He has knowledge of His Essence.

### 2. God's Essential Knowledge of the Creatures

#### point

As to the nature of God's Essential knowledge of the creatures, different views have been transmitted. These views are related to three issues. One is whether God's Essential and prior knowledge of the creatures is intuitive (ḥuḍūrī) or acquired (ḥuṣūlī). Another [issue] is whether God's prior knowledge of the things is general (ijmālī) or detailed (tafṣīlī). And the third [issue] is whether God's prior knowledge pertains to the existence (wujūd) or the quiddity (māhiyyah) of things.

#### 2.1. Shaykh al-Ishrāq's View

God's prior knowledge of the creatures is intuitive (ḥuḍūrī) and general (ijmālī) and pertains to their existence (wujūd). This view has been adopted by Shaykh al-Ishrāq(1) and his followers. According to this view, since God is knowledgeable of His Essence, and on the other hand, the Essence of God is the Cause behind the coming into existence of the creatures and knowledge of the Cause leads to the knowledge of the effect in general, it follows that God is essentially knowledgeable of all the things in the universe and His knowledge is intuitive and general.

The problem with this view is that detailed knowledge is superior to general knowledge. In this case, based on the said view, God's Essential knowledge of the creatures cannot be the most perfect knowledge. This is so while the Essence of God possesses all perfections in the highest degree possible:

( وَلِلَّهِ الأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَى )

"To Allah belong the Best Names."(2)

#### 2.2. Mu'tazilah View

God's prior knowledge of the creatures

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۱ - Shaykh al-Ishraq refers to Shahāb al-Dīn Yaḥyā Suhrawardī (b. ۱۱۵۵), a towering figure of the Illuminationist (ishrāqī) School of Islamic Philosophy. [Trans.]

۲- Sūrat al-A‘rāf ۷:۱۸۰.

is acquired (ḥuṣūlī) and detailed (tafṣīlī) and pertains to their quiddity, because prior to being created, their quiddity possesses a sort of subsistence (thubūt) (māhiyyāt-e ma‘dūmah or non-existential quiddities) and subsistence includes existence (wujūd). This view has been ascribed to the Mu‘tazilah who subscribe to the notion of pre-.(eternity subsistents (thābitāt-e azaliyyah

In addition to the fact that as will be proved later, there is no place for acquired knowledge in God, the problem with this view is that subsistence (thubūt) is equal to existence (wujūd) and anything which does not exist has no objective subsistence. .Therefore, belief in the pre-eternity subsistents is basically incorrect

### Ibn Sīnā's View .۲.۳

God's prior knowledge of the creatures is a detailed and acquired knowledge which pertains to the mental existence of the quiddities. For instance, when a person wants to do certain things, prior to their realization, he has detailed knowledge of them and this knowledge pertains to the mental existence of the quiddities of his actions. Ibn .Sīnā and his followers have adopted this view

The problem with this view is that acquired knowledge is related to the creatures which are in contact with matter in their essences or actions. By means of their faculties of sensory perception, they develop perception of the corporeal beings and present in themselves the quiddities of those beings and have knowledge of them. And through those mental quiddities, they also become knowledgeable of the actual existence of the things.(۱) And since God is immune from corporeality in terms of both Essence and



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Refer to the discussion on knowledge, knower and known in the books of - ۱ .philosophy

Action, acquired knowledge has no place in him. God's knowledge of His Essence or .His Actions is an intuitive knowledge

### Ṣadr al-Muta'allihīn's View .۲.۴

God's prior knowledge of the creatures is an intuitive knowledge and as to whether it is general or detailed, it is general as well as detailed, because in Essence, God is straightforwardly entitled to the existential perfections of all the creatures. Since existence is a single reality and has different levels, the highest level of existence is no other than God's Being. It is evident that every perfect [being] has deficient existential .levels in addition to a level of perfection which has no deficiency

Due to the fact, therefore, that God is not devoid of any of the levels of existential perfection, He automatically and solely possesses all the existential perfections which diversely and pluralistically exist in the creatures. From this perspective, therefore, God's Essential knowledge of the creatures is a general (ijmālī) knowledge (ijmāl in the sense of simplicity and oneness in contrast to tafṣīl in the sense of multiplicity and .(plurality

Meanwhile, after the coming into existence of the things, nothing shall be added to the knowledge of God, because no change takes place in the Divine Essence. From this perspective, God's eternal knowledge of the creatures is general as well as .detailed

If we assume that a person is knowledgeable of all the issues within a field of science in the sense that he has mastery of that field in that he has prior knowledge and answer to any

question within that field and that the answers he gives do not add anything to his knowledge, in this case the existence of multiplicity with respect to the answers he gives does not cause any change in his knowledge. He has knowledge of all the issues .before and after giving his answers

That which changes is the existence of answers which have general existence (simple and identical) in the essence of the knower, while having detailed existence (multiple and diverse) in his action. Yet, no change has found its way in the essence of the knower and his knowledge. Once it occurs that such an assumption is possible in the case of the human being, why is it not acceptable with respect to God who is the ?Necessary Being in essence

This view has been put forth by Ṣadr al-Muta'allihīn and accepted by all followers of the Transcendental School of Philosophy (ḥikmat al-muta'āliyah), and it is the best interpretation ever presented to explain God's eternal knowledge of the creatures. Traditions (aḥādith) also confirm this view. For instance, it is thus stated in some :traditions

عِلمُهُ بِهِ قَبْلَ كَوْنِهِ كَعِلْمِهِ بِهِ بَعْدَ كَوْنِهِ.

His knowledge of it prior to its existence is like His knowledge of it after its" (existence."(١

Ayyūb ibn Nūḥ asked Imām al-Ḥādī ('a) in a letter, thus: "Was God knowledgeable of "?the creatures prior to their creation, or not

The Imām ('a) thus wrote in reply to him: "God was knowledgeable of the creatures before creating them, just as He has knowledge



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Uṣūl al-Kāfī, vol. ١, "Kitāb al-Tawḥīd," section (bāb) on the Attributes of the Essence, -١ .ḥadīth ٢

(of them after their creation."(۱

As such, God's knowledge of the creatures in the realm of essence prior to their creation necessitates God's knowledge of His Essence, just as the existence of the creatures depends on the existence of the Divine Essence:(۲

فَكانَ عِلْمُهُ بِجَميعِ ما عَداهُ لازِمًا لِعِلْمِهِ لِذاتِهِ، كَما أَنَّ وُجودَ ما عَداهُ تابِعٌ لِوُجودِ ذاتِهِ

### God's Present Knowledge of the Creatures in the Present

#### point

God's knowledge of the creatures after creating them – or, God's knowledge of the creatures in the realm of action – is a detailed intuitive knowledge, but it is not identical with God's Essence because the assumption is that this knowledge is in the realm of action and action is outside the essence. Here, the reality of the creatures is .that they are God's action and His knowledge as well

As an analogy, it can be likened to the human being's knowledge of the mental forms he creates. The reality of these forms is also his action as well as his knowledge. That is, the said mental forms by themselves are present in him, and at the same time, they are his action and effect. Interpreting God's present knowledge of the creatures in this way is one of the initiatives of Shaykh al-Ishrāq. On this basis, there is no difference between the immaterial and material beings, for all of them are an effect and action of God, and their reality is the link itself to the Divine Being, and they are all (in the presence of God.(۳

#### The Divine Proofs

From the explanation of the three levels of God's



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.Ibid., ḥadīth ۴ -۱

Ṣadr al-Muta'allihīn, Al-Asfār al-Arba'ah, vol. ۶, p. ۱۷۹. For further information in this -۲ .regard, see 'Alī Rabbānī Gulpāygānī, Ayḍāḥ al-Ḥikmah, vol. ۲, pp. ۵۴۴-۵۴۷

Ṣadr al-Muta'allihīn and 'Allāmah al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī have made a distinction between -٣ immaterial and material beings. Accordingly, the presence of the immaterial beings is by themselves without any medium while the presence of the material beings is through the medium of the presence of their immaterial forms in the immaterial world. That which is stated in the text is the pertinent viewpoint of Ḥakīm Sabziwārī .which seems to be stronger. See Ayḍāḥ al-Ḥikmah, vol. ٢, pp. ٥٤٧-٥٤٨

knowledge, the proofs of God’s knowledge can also be inferred. The proof of God’s knowledge of His Essence is indeed the immunity of the Sacred Divine Essence from materiality and physical properties. Since the immaterial being is the very presence (ḥudur), whenever that Being is self-existent and does not depend on other beings, His existence is present for Himself. The reality of knowledge is also nothing except .(presence (ḥudūr) and exposure (inkishāf

The proof of God’s knowledge of the creatures in the realm of essence (prior to their creation) is that the Essence of God is the Cause of the creatures and He has knowledge also of His Essence. Therefore, He has knowledge of the creatures and knowledge of the cause necessitates knowledge of the effect; hence, God has .knowledge of the creatures

Moreover, the creatures are actions of God, the Exalted, and at the same time, they have rules and stability, order and harmony, and once an action has such characteristics, it is a proof of its agent’s knowledge and awareness. The rules and stability of the universe, therefore, is a proof of God’s prior knowledge of it [and its .[components

The proof of God’s knowledge of the creatures in the realm of action (knowledge after creating them) is that the creatures are actions and effects of God, and the essence of action is nothing but the link and attachment to the essence of its agent (fā‘il), and as a result, it is present before its agent and cause. The reality of

.the universe, therefore, is present before God and He has intuitive knowledge of it

In his Tajrīd al-I‘tiqād, Muḥaqqiq al-Ṭūsī has expressed the said argument in these :words

ألأحْكامُ وَالتَّجَرُّدُ، وَإسْتِنادُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ إلَيْهِ دَلائِلُ العِلْمِ.

That is to say that the laws and stability of the universe, the immateriality of the Divine Essence and emanation of the existence of all beings from God are proofs of (God's knowledge [of His Essence and the creatures].(١

#### The All-hearing, the All-seeing and the Perceiver

In many verses of the Qur'an, God is described as the All-hearing (al-samī‘) and the All-seeing (al-baṣīr).(٢) These descriptions have also been mentioned in the traditions as God's Attributes of Beauty. There are two views concerning the the meaning of al-samī‘ and al-baṣīr. One is that they refer to God's knowledge of audible and visible (things, and the other is that they are separate Attributes.(٣

The first view which is adopted by the philosophers and erudite theologians is acceptable. And perhaps the reason why al-samī‘ and al-baṣīr have been specifically mentioned in the Qur'an and traditions is that these two faculties of sensory perception have more prominent role in the knowledge of human being and he who usually expresses his knowledge by seeing and hearing. For this reason, once it is said that God is All-seeing and All-hearing, one can imagine better the all-pervasive knowledge of God in relation to himself and his actions, and as a result, this will .contribute much in his further training

The attribute of idrāk (apprehension) or al-mudrik (the Perceiver) has not been mentioned in



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١- Kashf al-Murād, station (maqṣad) ٣, chap. ٢, issue ٢.

٢- ٤١ The descriptions al-samī‘ and al-baṣīr as Attributes of God have been mentioned

.and ۴۲ times, respectively, in the Qur’an

.Qawā’id al-Murād, p. ۹۰ -۳

verses of the Qur’an as an Attribute of God, but in view of the holy verse, “Yet He apprehends the sights,”(١) which ascribes the action of apprehension to God,(٢) theologians have abstracted from it the attribute al-mudrik. There is also a difference of opinions on the meaning of idrāk. Some have considered it an attribute distinct from ‘ilm (knowledge) while others have interpreted it to mean knowledge of the details. And the latter opinion is acceptable.(٣)

**Review Questions**

١. Write down the three levels of God’s knowledge.

٢. Is God’s knowledge of His Essence intuitive (ḥudūrī) or acquired (ḥuṣūlī)? Why?

٣. Write down the view of Shaykh al-Ishrāq about God’s prior knowledge along with the criticism to it.

۴. Write down the view attributed to the Mu‘tazilah about God’s prior knowledge along with the criticism to it.

۵. What is Ibn Sīnā’s view about God’s prior knowledge? And what is the problem with it?

۶. Write down Ṣadr al-Muta’allihīn’s view about God’s prior knowledge.

٧. Explain God’s eternal knowledge of the creatures by citing a tradition (ḥadīth).

٨. What type of knowledge is God’s knowledge of the creatures after creating them?

٩. Write down two proofs of God’s knowledge.

١٠. What is the meaning of God’s being the All-hearing (al-sami‘) and the All-seeing (al-baṣīr)?

## Lesson ١۴: God’s Power and Will

### point

Power and ability are among the attributes of existential perfections, and God who

possesses all existential perfections has also the attribute of power (qudrah). God, therefore, is All-powerful and All-mighty. There is no dispute that God possesses this attribute, but there are different views on the



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١- Sūrat al-An'ām ۶:١٠٣.

٢- Fāḍil Miqdād, Irshād al-Ṭālibīn, pp. ٢٠۶-٢٠٧.

٣- Ibid.

.essence of power and the extent of God's power

### The Essence of Power

:There are two views about the definition of power and who the powerful (qādir) is

١. Qādir is He who has an attribute through which it is possible for Him to do or not to do a certain thing.(١) This definition is acceptable to a group of the theologians.

٢. Qādir is He who does something if He wants to and refrains from doing something if He wants to.(٢) This definition is acceptable to the philosophers and another group of the theologians.

The meaning of both definitions is that the powerful is not concomitant with an action or abandonment of an action. In other words, the powerful agent (fā'il) is he who is not compelled to do or not to do something; rather, he is independent. Power, therefore, is equal to or a concomitant of free-will (ikhtiyār). The opposite of the powerful and independent agent is the compelled and unfree agent who has no ability not to do something and whose action is certain and determined. The differences between free and unfree agent are the following:

١. The free agent is aware of his action as making a choice necessitates awareness, but the unfree agent is not aware of his action.

٢. It is possible to separate action, in terms of the essence of the agent, from the agent, but it is impossible to distinguish the action from the unfree agent.

٣. Since power is the same with respect to doing or not doing something, the powerful and



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١- Talkhīṣ al-Muḥaṣṣil, p. ٢۶٩.

٢- Qawā'id al-Murād, p. ٨٢.

free agent wills for his action. Hence, free action is tantamount to willpower (irādah), but the action of the unfree agent is not tantamount to willpower (as it is an involuntary action).

It becomes clear from what has been said that after the materialization of willpower, free action becomes incumbent and definite, but this incumbency is subsequent to willpower and free-will, and it has no contradiction with the independence of the agent.

It is to be noted that in philosophical parlance, God has eternal will and providence in creating every being with total ability and since they are creatures devoid of materiality – such as the intellects (‘uqūl) – the essential possibility of their ability is absolute and not restricted by specific potential possibility, time, place, and relationship. Such beings are not temporally contingent and they constantly receive the grace of existence from God. As a result, this belief has no contradiction with the independence of God, for according to their belief, God constantly bestows existence to them by His eternal will. On account of this belief, therefore, the philosophers must not be thought to be against the independence of God, as this attribution can be seen in the remarks of many theologians.(1)

### The Proof of God's Power and Will

Agitation or compulsion in action can be imagined when the agent is overtaken and compelled by a superior being. In this case, the agent can be considered forced and agitated; that is, the superior being imposes the action to the agent and influences him to do so contrary to his



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1- In this regard, see Talkhīṣ al-Muḥaṣṣil, p. ۲۶۸; Qawā’id al-‘Aqā’id, pp. ۴۹-۵۰; Irshād al-Ṭālibīn, p. ۱۸۳.

.desire

In view of the fact that God is the most Superior Being and He is not compelled and overpowered by any being, agitation and compulsion in action cannot be imagined .concerning Him. Therefore, He has created the universe with power and will

In other words, power and will are among the attributes of existential perfection, and the human nature or disposition (fiṭrah) which leads to the existence of God makes him recognize the Perfect and Supreme Being who possesses all existential .perfections

In addition, the order and stability of the universe are a clear tertimony to the power and will of a Creator, just as they indicate His knowledge and cognizance. As such, whenever referring to the creation of the heavens and the earth the Holy Qur'an calls to mind that their creation guides the human being to the power and knowledge of :the Creator, as it has been stated, thus

( اللَّهُ الَّذِى خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ وَمِنَ الأَرْضِ مِثْلَهُنَّ يَتَنَزَّلُ الأَمْرُ بَيْنَهُنَّ لِتَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدِيرٌ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ أَحَاطَ بِكُلِّ شَىْءٍ عِلْمًا )

It is Allah who has created seven heavens, and of the earth [a number] similar to" them. The command gradually descends through them, that you may know that Allah has power over all things, and that Allah comprehends all things in knowledge."(1)

:(This argument has also been pointed out in the sayings of Imām 'Alī ('a

وَأَرَانَا مِنْ مَلَكُوتِ قُدْرَتِهِ، وَعَجَائِبِ مَا نَطَقَتْ بِهِ آثَارُ حِكْمَتِهِ.

He showed us the realm of His Might, and such wonders which"



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۱- Sūrat al-Ṭalaq ۶۵:۱۲.

speak of His Wisdom.”(1)

وَأَقَامَ مِنْ شَوَاهِدِ الْبَيِّنَاتِ عَلَى لَطِيفِ صَنْعَتِهِ، وَعَظِيمِ قُدْرَتِهِ.

“And He has established such clear proofs for His delicate creative power and great might.”(2)

#### The Extent of God’s Power

The proofs of God’s power indicate the vast expanse of His power. The vast expanse of power has two meanings. One is that God is capable of creating any essence (dhāt) or quiddity (māhiyyah) which is a possible being (mumkin al-wujūd) although He has not created every possible being according to His wisdom, knowledge and will.

Instead, He has created that which is necessitated by the system of what is best and most wholesome. Another meaning is that all creatures are linked with the power of God. From this perspective, there is no difference between the physical and non-physical beings, human and non-human. As a result, the human actions are also within the realm of the vast expanse of God’s power.

The term “universality of God’s power” contained in books of theology refers to the second meaning. This point is raised here because some theologians have set limits on the scope of God’s power. For instance, some of them have said that the power of God has nothing to do with the undesirable actions done by human beings because they believe that such a link between God’s power and those actions necessitates attributing them to Him which is in conflict with the principle that God is free from evil acts.(3)

The reply to this is that the criterion for linking power to the creatures also exists in



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۱- Nahj al-Balāghah, Sermon ۹۱.

۲- Ibid., Sermon ۱۶۵.

۳- This notion has been attributed to the Mu‘tazilah school of thought.

the human actions, and that is their being possible beings (mumkin al-wujūd). No ,possible being could exist without the power of God. As Muḥaqqiq al-Ṭūsī has said

وَعُمومِيَّهُ الْعِلَّهِ تَسْتَلْزِمُ عُمومِيّهَ الصِّفهِ.

And the universality of the Cause necessitates the universality of the Attribute [of" (Power]."(١)

That is to say that the cause and criterion for linking God's power to the creatures (their essential contingence) is general. The link of God's power to the creatures, .therefore, is also general and universal

Meanwhile, an abominable act – on account of its being abominable – cannot be ascribed to God, but rather from the perspective of its existence and reality that it is .encompassed by the power of God and in this perspective, it is not abominable

From the cosmic point of view, for example, honesty and lying are the same and in this perspective, they are both ontologically 'good' but moral goodness and evil are derived after the materialization of speech (takallum) and judging them with the .dictates of reason and religious laws

That which conforms to the laws of reason and religion is good, otherwise it is bad. And the basis of this conformity or non-conformity is indeed the freewill and desire of .the human being; hence, moral goodness or evil can be traced back to his action

#### Power and Potentiality

Power (qudrah) is a characteristic of the agent (fā'il) while potentiality (imkān) is a characteristic of action (fi'l). In other words, power is the attribute of the powerful (qādir) while potentiality is the attribute of the



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.Kashf al-Murād, station (maqṣad) ٣, chap. ٢, issue ٢ -١

possible (maqdūr). There is a talk, therefore, about the link of power to action; potentiality (as opposed to obligatoriness (wujūb) and refusal (imtinā‘)) has been given as presumption on the issue or linkage of power, because the obligatory (wājib) and impossible (imtinā‘) – on account of concomitance with necessity (ḍarūrah) – .cannot be subjected to or bound by power

Necessity in the Necessary by Essence (wājib bi ’dh-dhāt) means that the Wājib is not in need of the link of an external power to His existence. And necessity in the impossible by essence (mumtani‘ bi ’dh-dhāt) means that its absence it definite and its existence is impossible. As such, it is will not be bound by power because the role of .power is to exert influence and bestow existence

**Reply to Some Misgivings**

At this juncture, one can easily reply to some misgivings in relation to the universality :of God’s power

١. Can God create a being which He cannot annihilate after creating it? If He cannot, it follows that His power is limited and if He can, it follows that after creating it, His .power is limited with respect to the continuity of its existence

The reply is that such a being is impossible by essence, because the hypothetical being is possible by essence (mumkin bi ’dh-dhāt) and necessary by essence (wājib bi ’dh-dhāt) at the same time. Being a created one (makhlūq) it is possible by essence and being perishable, it is impossible by essence. And this is contradiction in essence .and essential impossibility

٢.

Can God create something similar to Himself? If He can, it follows that the principle of .His uniqueness is void and if He cannot, it follows that His power is limited

The reply to this is that such a being is impossible by essence, because if he is similar to God, it follows that he is the Necessary Being by essence, but since he is created, he is tantamount to non-being and possible being by essence, and to be possible by essence and necessary by essence at the same time is contradiction in essence, and it .is impossible

Can God put the universe inside a chicken egg without making the universe become .٣ smaller or the egg becoming bigger? If He can, it follows that the law of proportionality of the container (ẓarf) and the contained (maẓrūf) is invalid and if He .cannot, it follows that His power is limited

The reply is that this assumption necessitates impossibility because as hinted in the misgiving itself, the proportionality of the container and the contained is a rational principle and denial of it necessitates contradiction. That is, the contained is proportional and at the same time not proportional to its container, and thus, not .bound by power

:In reply to this question, Imām 'Alī ('a) has said

إِنَّ اللهَ تَبارَكَ وَتَعالىٰ لايُنْسَبُ إِلَى الْعَجْزِ، وَالَّذى سَأَلْتَنى لايَكونُ.

That is to say that impotence or inability has no place in God, the Blessed and Exalted, (and that which is raised in the question is impossible.(١

**Review Questions**

State the concept of .١

p: ١٣١

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.Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, Al-Tawḥīd, section (bāb) ٩, ḥadīth ٩ -١

power and write down the two views in this regard.

۲. State the difference between the free (mukhtār) and unfree (mawjib) agent.

۳. State the proof of God's power while considering His being the absolutely perfect.

۴. Explain the proof of God's power while considering the stable system of the universe.

۵. Write down the reason for the vast expanse of God's power along with its meaning.

۶. What is the meaning of the term "universality of God's power"?

۷. Can the power of God be bound by things which are existentially impossible by essence? Why?

۸. Can God create a being which He cannot extinguish after creating it?

۹. Can God create a being like Himself? Why?

## Lesson ۱۵: Life, Pre–existence and Eternity

### Divine Life

One of the Attributes of Perfection of God is that of Life (ḥayāh), as the name Al-ḥayy (the Ever-living) is one of the Most Beautiful Names of God. The name Al-ḥayy has been applied to God in verses of the Holy Qur'an, and in most cases, it is accompanied by the name or attribute Al-qayyūm (the Self-existing). For example, it is thus said:

( اللّهُ لاَ إِلَـهَ إِلاَّ هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ )

"Allah—there is no god except Him—is the Living One, the All-sustainer."[۱]

In one verse, God has been described as the Living One who does not die:

( وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى الْحَيِّ الَّذِي لَا يَمُوتُ )

"Put your trust in the Living One who does not die."[۲]

In a verse quoted earlier, the expression of praise (kalimah al-tahlīl) – Lā ilāha illallāh (There is no god but Allah) – comes before the Name Al-ḥayy, but

p: ١٣٢

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١- Sūrat al-Baqarah ٢:٢٥٥; Sūrat Āl ʻImrān ٣:٢.

٢- Sūrat al-Furqān ٢٥:٥٨.

:in other verses, the said Divine Name comes before the expression of praise

( هُوَ الْحَيُّ لا إِلَهَ إِلا هُوَ فَادْعُوهُ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ )

He is the Living One, there is no god except Him. So supplicate Him, putting exclusive" (faith in Him."(١)

This verse points to Eternal Life as exclusive for God, showing that except Him, no one is ever-living, just as Godhood (ulūhiyyah) is exclusive to God. What is meant, therefore, by Al-ḥayy in the verse "He is the Living One" and the like is "the Living One by essence" (al-ḥayy bi 'dh-dhāt). It means that there is no Living One by essence .except God and other beings receive the bounty of life from Him

As such, God is the Living One by essence and the Origin of the lives of other beings, and this is the meaning of His Self-existence (qayyūmiyyah). Al-qayyūm (the Self-existing) means that God is the Ever-standing and the Subsistence-bestower to the creatures, and since His Life is essential and necessary, He knows no death and .annihilation

## The Essence and Classifications of Life

:Ḥayāh (life) has various functions

١. It means existence and being. It is in view of this meaning of life that the absolute existence is called 'ever-flowing life' (ḥayāt al-sāriyah).(٢) In the Holy Qur'an, aḥyā' (to :give life) is applied to creation and origination. For instance, it is thus stated

( وَهُوَ الَّذِى أَحْيَاكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ إِنَّ الإنْسَانَ لَكَفُورٌ )

It is He who gave life then He makes you die, then He brings you to life. Indeed man" is very



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١- ٤٠:٦٥ Sūrat al-Ghāfir (or al-Mu'min).

٢- ٢٣٨ Ḥakīm Sabziwārī, Sharḥ al-Asmā' al-Ḥusnā, p.

(ungrateful."(1)

The phrase aḥyākum (He gave you life) is synonymous with the phrase khalqakum (He created you) in this verse in which the opposite of ḥayāh (life) is non-existence:

( اللَّهُ الَّذِی خَلَقَكُمْ ثُمَّ رَزَقَكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُحيِيكُم )

"It is Allah who created you and then provided for you, then He makes you die."(2)

2. Ḥayāh means derivation of the desirable effects from every thing, and the opposite of ḥayāh in this function is non-derivation of the desirable effects from every thing. For example, the revival of the earth means the growing of plants in it and its fertility and productivity, and the opposite is the 'death of the earth'. The life of the human being lies in taking a step toward innate guidance and thus he must be a reasonable and religious person. For this reason, the Holy Qur'an has considered religion the human being's life, for the true religion which is Islam is concomitant with the Divine disposition (fiṭrah).(3)

3. Ḥayāh means a salient feature of the existent which is the source of performance of volitional acts. This kind of life can be found in the various types of animals and through scientific studies, it has been discovered that it also exists in plants (or at least some of them). This kind of life has some salient features such as self-protection, environmental adaptation, habit and disposition, nourishment, growth, reproduction, objective-setting and selection, awareness and potentiality. The last two features (awareness and potentiality) are the most important and they manifest more



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۱- Sūrat al-Ḥajj ۲۲:۶۶.

۲- Sūrat ar-Rūm ۳۰:۴۰.

۳- Allāmah al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī, Al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān, vol. ۱, pp. ۵۱-۵۲.

in the human being. For this reason, philosophers have defined life with these two :salient features

أَلْحَياةُ هِيَ كَوْنُ الشَّيْءِ بِحَيْثُ يَصْدُرُ عَنْهُ الأَفْعالُ الصّادِرَهُ عَنِ الإَحْياءِ مِنْ آثارِ الْعِلْمِ وَالقُدْرَهِ.

That is to say that life means the existence of a thing in the form of actions that emanate from living creatures – conscious actions on the basis of power and freewill (that emanate from them.(١

Let us elaborate [this aforesaid idea].. In studying the creatures, the human being has found them to be of two types. One type consists of the creatures which have only one state as long as they exist in terms of sensory observation. Stones and similar objects belong to this type. The second type consists of creatures whose powers and actions stop in many cases although they exist and in terms of sensory observation, no defect can be found in them. Examples of this type are the human beings and .various types of animals and plants

In many instances, although their physical faculties and senses are sound, they cannot make certain moves and turns. At this point, the human being has arrived at the conclusion that this kind of creatures – in addition to the sensory and physical faculties and powers – has a distinctive feature which is the very source of feelings, mental perceptions and actions anchored in knowledge and free-will. That feature is called 'life'. Therefore, life means a kind of existence from which knowledge and (power emanate: (٢

فَالْحَياهُ نَحو وُجودٍ يَتَرَشَّحُ عَنْهُ العِلْمُ وَالْقُدْرَهُ.



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.Ṣadr al-Muta'allihīn, Al-Asfār al-Arba'ah, vol. ۶, p. ۴۱۷ -١

.Allāmah al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī, Al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān, vol. ٢, pp. ٣٢٨-٣٢٩' -٢

### The Essence of Life with Respect to God

From the previous analysis, it becomes clear that ḥayāh (life) – especially in its last meaning – is a degree of existential perfection which is realized in every creature according to its capacity and level. Knowledge, power and will can be regarded as among its properties and effects. The essence of life with respect to God, therefore, is .an attribute which is concomitant with the said features and effects

Of course, these features and effects are proportionate to the existential level of God which is the very Necessity (wujūb) and Pure Existence (ṣirf al-wujūd). Hence, although the meanings of the Attributes and Names with respect to God – as well as to others – vary, their manifestations point to an Indivisible (basīṭ) and Pure (ṣirf) Being who is the very Life, Knowledge and Will, [and the ultimate source of all who .[have life, knowledge and will

### The Proof of Divine Life

Given the previous discussions, the proof of Divine Life also becomes clear, for once an attribute is from the existential perfections in the sense that it exists from the perfections of the Existent by Himself (and not from the perfections of a specific natural, partial or similar existent), no doubt, God is entitled to that perfection, for in the Necessary Being by essence, there is no room for deficiency and contingence. Any attribute which can be conceived for Him by general possibility (in the sense that its (materialization for Him is not impossible), definitely exists in Him.(١)

[In his Tajrīd al-I'tiqād, after proving [the existence of



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.Ṣadr al-Muta'allihīn, Asfār al-Arba'ah, vol. ۶, p. ۴١٨ -١

power and knowledge in God, Muḥaqqiq al-Ṭūsī has said:

كُلُّ قادِرٍ عالِمٌ حَيٌّ بِالضَّرورهِ.

“Every powerful [and] knowledgeable [being] is necessarily living.”(۱)

That is, every powerful and knowledgeable creature is definitely alive, and since God is Powerful and Knowledgeable, it follows that He has the Attribute of Life.

**Pre–existence and Eternity**

All religious and theist personalities recognize God as Pre-existent (azalī), Eternal (abadī), Everlasting (qadīm), Abiding (bāqī), and Immortal (sarmadī). There are two viewpoints on the interpretation of these attributes:

The first viewpoint which is popular and acceptable within the circle of philosophers is that these attributes have been interpreted in relation to time. On this basis, pre-existence (azaliyyah) and pre-eternity (qadam) means that God has existed in all the past periods, nay even before any earliest period that could be conceived, while eternity (abadiyyah) and subsistence (baqā) means that God will exist at all times to come. And immortality (sarmadiyyah) means that God’s Being will exist at all times – both past and present. It is worth mentioning that the scholastic theologians (mutakallimūn) have divided time (zamān) into implied (muqaddar) and ascertained (muḥaqqaq) [of the real and hypothetical time], and what they mean by time in interpreting the abovementioned attributes is its general meaning.

This viewpoint is not free from controversy, for it is true that no time does God not exist can be assumed but measuring pre-existence and eternity on the basis of time necessitates treating God as a temporal being. This is so while God is behind time as commonly acknowledged by the theologians and theosophers.

p: ۱۳۷

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۱- Kashf al-Murād, station (maqṣad) ۳, chap. ۲, issue ۳.

In reality, this interpretation stems from a superficial and ordinary understanding of the existence of God.

The second viewpoint which is adopted by the theosophers maintains that pre-existence and pre-eternity means that God's Being is not preceded by non-existence – whether non-existence by separation (mafāriq) or non-existence by combination (majāmi') – as He is the Necessary Being by essence, and eternity and subsistence imply that there will be no non-existence ('adam), posterior (lāḥiq) and accidental states ('āriḍ) in God's existence as He is the Necessary Being by essence. In other words, since God is the Necessary Being by essence, non-existence or non-being – prior or posterior – has no place in Him.

Whenever we refer to prior non-existence, it is called pre-existence (azaliyyah) and pre-eternity (qadam). Whenever we mean posterior non-existence, it is named eternity (abadiyyah) and subsistence (baqā). And whenever we imply both aspects, it is described as immortality (sarmadiyyah). Sometimes sarmadiyyah is used as synonym of abadiyyah and baqā, as in the following expression of Muḥaqqiq al-Ṭūsī:

وَوُجُوبُ الْوُجودِ يَدُلُّ عَلىٰ سَرْمَدِيَّتِهِ وَنَفْيِ الزّائِدِ.

"And being the Necessary Being implies immortality and the negation of added qualities."(۱)

That is, being the Necessary Being proves that God is immortal and that His immortality and subsistence are identical with His Essence and not through the medium of a quality separate from His Essence (in contrast to Abū 'l-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī's notion of God's subsistence as separate from His Essence).

The expression quoted above shows that the late Ṭūsī has measured immortality on the basis of God's



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۱- Kashf al-Murād, station (maqṣad) ۳, chap. ۲, issue ۷.

being the Necessary Being by essence and not on the scale of lack of temporal .beginning and end

**Review Questions**

.State God's Attribute of Life while keeping in view verses of the Qur'an .١

.(Explain briefly the different usages of ḥayāh (life .٢

.Write down the definition of ḥayāh by the philosophers with elaboration .٣

.Explain the essence of life with respect to God .۴

.Write down the proof of God's life .۵

.State the theologians' viewpoint on pre-existence and eternity .۶

Write down the pre-existence and eternity of God from the viewpoint of the . ٧ .theosophers

## Lesson ١۶: The Divine Will and Decree

**point**

One of the Attributes of Perfection of God is that of will (irādah) and decree (mashiyyah), as Al-murīd (the Desirous or Willing) is considered one of the Divine Names. In the Holy Qur'an, the words mashiyyah, irādah and al-murīd have not been used for God, but in many verses the phrases shā' Allāh, yashā' Allāh, arād Allāh, .aradnā, yurīd Allāh, and nurīd have been used

In view of these action words, the attributes of mashiyyah and irādah and the nouns shā'ī (decree-giver) and murīd can be abstracted and used as the Attributes and Names of God. In addition, the usage of the said Attributes and Names can also be (found in Prophetic traditions.(١

Some theologians have regarded will and decree as an attribute while others have treated them as two separate attributes, and something has been transmitted

regarding the dimensions of the difference between the two.(٢) What can be inferred from the Qur'anic usages of these two words is that



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١- See Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, Kitāb al-Tawḥīd, sections on the Attributes of the Essence and Actions, and on the Divine will and decree.

٢- See Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, Al-Mufradāt, under the words irādah and mashiyyah.

mashiyyah is only used in cosmic (takwīnī) matters while irādah is used in cosmic as well as legislative (tashrī‘ī) matters. Keeping in view the totally of [relevant] verses of the Qur’an and traditions, it can be argued that with respect to God, irādah and .mashiyyah refer to an attribute

## Some Views on the Essence of Will

Different views have been expressed by philosophers and theologians on the essence of will (irādah) with respect to God and whether it is one of the Attributes of Essence :or one of the Attributes of Action

God’s will in relation to His Actions (cosmic will) is identical with the origination of .۱ actions and His will in relation to human actions (legislative will) is the command to .execute the actions

(Shaykh al-Mufīd(۱) has subscribed to this view.(۲

Allāmah al-Ṭabāṭabā’ī who has also regarded the cosmic will of God as one of His‘ Attributes of Action has said, “The will which is attributed to God is abstracted from His Action or from the Action itself which is realized outwardly, or from the total (realization of the Action.”(۳

The cosmic will of God means His knowledge that the action which is consistent with .۲ (order is the best. This view is popular among the Muslim philosophers.(۴

The cosmic will of God means His knowledge that an action encompasses what is .۳ good for the human beings and all other creatures. The Mu‘tazilah and Imāmiyyah (theologians who advocate this view call this knowledge as dā‘ī (motive).(۵

The will of God is an attribute separate from His knowledge, power, and Attributes .۴

p: ۱۴۰

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Shaykh al-Mufīd: the common designation of Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn - ۱ Muḥammad ibn Nu‘mān al-Hārithī (d. ۴۱۳ AH/۱۰۲۲) who was a great Shī‘ah jurist (fiqh),

traditionist (muḥaddith) and scholar of scholasticism (mutakallim). Notable among his disciples were Sayyid Murtaḍā ‘Alam al-Hudā, Sayyid ar-Raḍī, Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, and al-Najashī. Around ۲۰۰ works are attributed to him, from which Kitāb al-Irshād, Ikhtiṣāṣ, Awā’il al-Maqālāt, Al-‘Amalī, and Al-Maqna‘ah can be cited. See Shaykh al-Mufīd, Kitāb al-Irshād: The Book of Guidance into the Lives of the Twelve Imāms, trans. I.K.A. Howard (London: The Muhammadi Trust, ۱۹۸۱), introduction, pp. xxi-xxvii; Martin J. McDermott, The Theology of al-Shaikh al-Mufīd (Beirut: Dar al-Mashreq, ۱۹۷۸), introduction, pp. ۸-۴۵. [Trans.]

۲- Shaykh al-Mufīd, Awā’il al-Maqālāt, p. ۵۸.

۳- ‘Allāmah al-Ṭabāṭabā’ī, Nihāyat al-Ḥikmah, stage (marḥalah) ۱۲, chap. ۱۰.

۴- Ḥakīm Sabziwārī, Sharḥ Manzūmah, farīdah ۲, discussion on will (irādah); Ṣadr al-Muta’allihīn, Al-Asfār al-Arba‘ah, vol. ۶, p. ۳۱۷.

۵- Muḥaqqiq al-Ṭūsī, Qawā’id al-‘Aqā’id, p. ۵۷.

of Essence, and it is among the Essential and Eternal Attributes of God. This view is (acceptable to the Ashā'irah.(١

The will of God is an Essential Attribute distinct from other Essential Attributes, and .۵ at the same time, it is contingent (ḥādith). Its state is either contingent in essence as claimed by the Karrāmiyyah group,(٢) or contingent neither in essence nor other than (essence (ḥādith lā fī maḥall) as described by Abū 'Alī and Abū Hāshim.(٣

Irādah is one of the Attributes of the Divine Essence, but it has negative sense; that .۶ is, the agency (fā'iliyyah) of God is not based on compulsion or forgetfulness .((conscious and volitional

(This view has been adopted by Ḥusayn al-Najjār, a Mu'tazilī theologian.(۴

The essence of irādah is exaltation (ibtihāj) and contentment (riḍā'), and it is divided .٧ :into two, viz. essential (dhātī) and active (fi'lī) irādah

The essential exaltation and contentment is the essential will while the active exaltation and contentment is the active will (irādah-ye fi'lī). Since God is Pure (ṣirf) and Absolute (maḥḍ) Being, He is essentially elated (mubtahij bi 'dh-dhāt), and His Essence is being Self-contented (essential contentment (riḍā' bi 'dh-dhāt equals .((essential will (irādah-ye dhātī

Meanwhile, essential exaltation and contentment necessitates exaltation and contentment in the stage of action, for "Whoever loves something loves its effects" (that is, exaltation and contentment in the stage of action equals active will (irādah-ye fi'lī)). Muḥaqqiq al-Iṣfahānī, better known as Kampānī,(۵) has subscribed to this (view.(۶

## Assessment of the Views

The first view which has regarded irādah as only an Attribute

۱- Sayyid Sharīf Gurgānī, Sharḥ al-Mawāqif, vol. ۸, pp. ۸۱-۸۷.

۲- Karrāmiyyah: followers of Muḥammad ibn Karrām Sijistānī (died ۲۵۵ AH). This sect has subscribed to anthromorphism and incarnation.

۳- Muḥaqqiq al-Ṭūsī, Qawā'id al-'Aqā'id, p. ۵۷; Sa'd al-Dīn Taftazānī, Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid, vol. ۴, p. ۱۲۸.

۴- Abū 'Abd Allāh Ḥusayn Najjār al-Rāzī (died ۳۲۰ AH).

۵- Muḥaqqiq al-Iṣfahānī or Kampānī: the author of an important and popular book entitled Nihāyat al-Dirāyah, which is a gloss to the treatise Kifāyat al-Uṣūl by Muḥaqqiq Khurāsānī.

۶- Nihāyat al-Dirāyah, vol. ۱, p. ۱۱۶.

of Action is consistent with some traditions transmitted from the pure Imāms (‘a) .about the Divine will and decree. We shall elaborate later

The second and third views have consensus in interpreting irādah to mean the eternal knowledge of God. Yet, they also differ [in the detail]; in the second view, irādah is interpreted to mean knowledge of the best order while in the third view, it refers to knowledge of the exigency of the action. The second view is compatible with the criteria of discursive intellect (‘aql-e naẓarī) while the third view is harmonious with the standards of practical intellect (‘aql-e ‘amalī). The discussion on the excellence of order belongs to the sphere of theoretical intellect while the discussion on the exigency of an action pertains to the domain of practical intellect. We shall review .these two views later

No explanation or justification of the fourth view has ever been transmitted, and it has been put forth as a mere claim. A review of it shall be made after the following .examination

While considering irādah an Essential Attribute of God, the fifth view has treated it as contingent (ḥādith). It is evident that pre-existence (azaliyyah) and contingency .(ḥudūth) cannot go hand in hand

The sixth view is also unacceptable because irādah is one of the Positive Attributes (al-ṣifat al-thubūtiyyah) and not one of the Negative Attributes (al-ṣifāt al-salbiyyah). .Therefore, it must be not identified as a Negative Attribute

The point of strength of the seventh view is in interpreting irādah in the realms of

Essence and Action. Yet, the problem with this view is in treating the concepts of exaltation (ibtihāj) and contentment (riḍā’) as identical with those of will (irādah) and decree (mashiyyah), and interchanging the two concepts is similar to interchanging knowledge and power, which is inadmissible. In addition, traditions stipulate that irādah is contingent and one of the Attributes of Action, and not an Attribute of .Essence

**An Examination and Analysis**

The criterion for proving the Positive Attributes with respect to God is that an attribute which exists from the perfections of the Being by Himself (the Absolute Being) exists in God in the most perfect and complete manner, for it is impossible for God who is the .Necessary Being to have no existential perfections

However, some attributes are perfections of a particular being and not by the Being that exists by Himself; for example, seeing by means of the faculty of sight, ability to walk [by feet], and the like (from among the perfections of the natural creatures). Such existential perfections cannot be established for God because doing so necessitates corporeality (jasmāniyyah), movement, change and other attributes of .deficiency which are concomitant with contingency (imkān) and insufficiency

Meanwhile, the way of knowing whether an attribute is one of the perfections of the Self-existent or one of particular existential perfections (natural creatures) is to take away contingent (imkānī), physical (māddī) and natural (ṭabī‘ī) traits from it. The concept which remains after the purging is one of the Attributes of existential .[perfection [of the Absolute Being

,However

if the essence of the said attribute also ceases to exist after purging those traits, it follows that the said attribute is one of the perfections of a particular being and not the Self-existent. For example, knowledge in the human being has some characteristics and after purging knowledge of those characteristics, nothing remains except discovery (inkishāf) and presence (ḥuḍūr). That is, the reality of the known (ma‘lūm) before itself is discovery and presence, and this is the truth of knowledge. .We can establish this truth for God

Now, if we apply this method to irādah, we will find out that no other attribute will remain except free-will (ikhtiyār). The essence of irādah in the human being is a mental (nafsānī) state which is derived from knowledge and desire (shawq). This mental state is only necessary in relation to the actions of the limbs (af‘āl-e jawāriḥī), and not necessary with respect to inward actions (af‘āl-e jawāniḥī) which include irādah. That is, irādah is one of the voluntary actions of the self (nafs) but it is not precedented by itself. Meanwhile, once an action is materialized, irādah ceases to exist whereas the attribute of free-will remains the same prior to, during, and after, .an action

From the above analysis, it can be inferred that what is one of the Attributes of Perfection for the Self-existent is the attribute of ikhtiyār and not irādah, and that which is an Essential Attribute is ikhtiyār and not irādah. It is true that irādah can be abstracted from

the stage of action, just as the attributes of rizq (sustenance) and al-rāziq (the Sustainer) are abstracted from the stage of action.

The totality of the causes and preliminaries of the action are attributed to God (relative to the agent or mover) as well as to action (cause and effect relationship). In the context of the first relationship, God is called Al-murīd (the Willing and Desirous One) and the Divine Will is abstracted, while in the context of the second relationship, the action is God's object of will (murād).(١)

It is worth mentioning that the present discourse pertains to the derivation of the essence of irādah from knowledge or power, and not the unity of its manifestations as the Divine Unity in the Attributes demands. For example, the concept or essence of power is not identical with the concept or essence of power, although they are the same for being among the manifestations of the Divine Essence.

#### The Divine Will as Described in Traditions

As we have said earlier, irādah has been regarded in the traditions (aḥādīth) as one of the Attributes of God's Action, thereby stipulating its being contingent (ḥādith). Interpreting it to mean eternal knowledge is equally negated [in the traditions]. Now, we shall quote below some examples of pertinent traditions:

١. Muḥammad ibn Muslim reported that Imām al-Ṣādiq ('a) said:

أَلمَشِيَّهُ مُحْدَثَهٌ.

"The will [of God] is contingent."(٢)

٢. In a tradition transmitted by Ṣafwān ibn Yaḥyā from Imām al-Kāẓim ('a), after stating the characteristics of irādah in the human being and that these characteristics are impossible with regards to



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١- 'Allāmah al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī, Nihāyat al-Ḥikmah, stage ١٢, chap. ١١; Al-Asfār al-Arba'ah,

‘Allāmah al-Ṭabāṭabā’ī’s gloss to Al-Asfār al-Arba‘ah (vol. ۶, pp. ۳۱۵-۳۱۶, ۳۵۳).

۲ - Shāykh al-Ṣadūq, Kitāb al-Tawḥīd, section (bāb) on the Attributes of Essence, ḥadīth ۱۸.

God, the Imām (‘a) has said:

فَإرادَةُ اللهِ هِیَ الْفِعلُ لا غَیْرُ ذلِکَ، یَقولُ لَهُ کُنْ فَیَکونُ.

“The will of Allah is the action itself and nothing else. He say, ‘Be’ and it is.”(١)

٣. Āṣim ibn Ḥamīd asked Imām al-Ṣādiq (‘a), thus: “Has God been the Desirous (al-murīd) from eternity?” The Imām (‘a) replied:

إنَّ المُریدَ لا یَکونُ إلاّ لِمُرادٍ مَعَهُ، بَل لَّمْ یَزَلْ عالِماً قادِراً ثُمَّ أَرادَ.

“Indeed there cannot be the Desirous (al-murīd) without the object of desire (murād). Instead, He has been all-knowing and all-powerful from eternity and then He willed.”(٢)

۴. Bakīr ibn A‘yan asked Imām al-Ṣādiq (‘a), “Are the knowledge and will of Allah identical or distinct from each other?” The Imām (‘a) replied:

“[His] knowledge is different from [His] will on account of which we say, ‘I will do something if Allah wills,’ and we do not say, ‘I will do something if Allah knows.’ Thus, that we say, “If Allah wills” shows that He has not desired prior to this. Whenever He desires something to materialize, it will materialize the way He wants it, and the knowledge of Allah precedes His will.”(٣)

۵. Imām al-Riḍā (‘a) is reported to have said:

أَلْمَشِیَّةُ وَالْإرادَةُ مِنْ صِفاتِ الْأفْعالِ.

“The decree and will [of God] is among the Attributes of Actions.”(۴)

۶. In his debate with ‘Imrān the Sabian, Imām al-Riḍā (‘a) has said:

وَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ الْإبْداعَ وَالْمَشِیَّةَ وَالْإرادَةَ مَعْناها وَاحِدٌ وَأَسْماؤُها ثَلاثَةٌ.

“And know that origination, decree and will have the same meaning and they have three names.”(۵)

(In a long debate between Imām al-Riḍā (‘a .۷

p: ۱۴۶

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.Ibid., ḥadīth ۱۷ -۱

.Ibid., ḥadīth ۱۵ -۲

.Ibid., ḥadīth ۱۶ -۳

.Ibid., section (bāb) on the Divine will and decree, ḥadīth ۵ -۴

.Ibid., p. ۴۳۵ -۵

and Sulaymān Marwazī, the renowned Mu‘tazilī theologian of Khurāsān, that took place in the court of [the ‘Abbāsid caliph] Ma‘mūn, one of the issues they disputed on was whether the will of God is one of the Attributes of Essence or the Attributes of Action and whether will is identical with knowledge or a distinct attribute. Sulaymān has considered will one of the Essential Attributes and interpreted it as knowledge (as the Mu‘tazilah do subscribe) while Imām al-Riḍā (‘a) has regarded it as contingent and an Attribute of Action.(١)

**Review Questions**

١. Write down the difference between the will and the decree of God by considering their Qur’anic usages.

٢. State the views of philosophers and theologians about the Divine will.

٣. Write down the correct view about the essence of will with respect to God along with its proof.

۴. What is the criterion for establishing the Positive Attributes in God?

۵. What is the reply of Imām al-Ṣādiq (‘a) to the question of Bakīr ibn A‘yan about God’s will?

## Lesson ١٧: The Divine Speech and Word

**point**

There is no dispute that speech (takallum) is one of the Positive Attributes and Attributes of Perfection of God, as this point has been mentioned in Qur’anic verses and traditions (aḥādīth). However, different views have been put forth on the meaning of God’s word (kalām) and whether God’s word is contingent or eternal, and whether speech is one of the Attributes of Essence or Attributes of Action of God.

### ١. The Ahl al-Ḥadīth and Ḥanbalīs

The Ahl al-Ḥadith and Ḥanbalīs consider the word of God (kalām Allāh) consisting of the

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۱- Ibid., pp. ۴۴۵-۴۵۴.

letters and sounds (literal word). Yet, they are of the opinion that kalām is eternal and an Attribute of God's Essence.(1) There is no doubt in the incorrectness of this view. If letters and sounds are physical things and contingent in time, how can one consider kalām which is composed by them to be eternal?

## 2. Justice–Oriented Theologians

The Mu'tazilah and Imāmiyyah theologians regard the word of God as verbal (lafẓī) and contingent (ḥādith). On this basis, attributing speech to God is like ascribing an action to an agent (isnād-e ṣudūrī or emanative attribution) and not like attributing an accidental quality ('arḍ) to an object of accident (ma'rūḍ) (isnād-e 'arūḍī or accidental attribution). For example, mun'im (benefactor) means the provider of blessing (ni'mah) to others; rāziq (sustainer) means the bestower of sustainance (rizq); in the same manner, mutakallim (speaker) means the originator of speech (kalām).(2)

On this basis, the Holy Qur'an, as the word of God, is created and contingent. Qur'anic verses clearly indicate the word of God is contingent:

( مَا يَأْتِيهِمْ مِنْ ذِكْرٍ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ مُحْدَثٍ إِلا اسْتَمَعُوهُ وَهُمْ يَلْعَبُونَ )

"There does not come to them any new reminder from their Lord but they listen to it as they play around."(3)

What is meant by 'reminder' (dhikr) in this verse is the Holy Qur'an, as another verse has thus stated:

( إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ )

"Indeed We have sent down the Reminder and indeed We will preserve it."(4)

The first verse implies that their Lord does not send for them a new reminder



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1- Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, Uṣūl al-Dīn, p. ۵۶; Shahristānī, Al-Milal wa 'n-Niḥal, vol. ١, p. ١٠۶.

2- Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār, Sharḥ al-Uṣūl al-Khamsah, p. ٣۶٧; Ibn Maytham al-Baḥrānī,

.Qawā‘id al-Murād, p. ۹۲

.Sūrat al-Anbiyā’ ۲۱:۲ -۳

.Sūrat al-Ḥijr ۱۵:۹ -۴

the Qur’an) except that they listen to it, but they do not take it seriously as they are) busy in amusement and entertainment. Also, the second verse talks about the revelation of the Qur’an and guarantees its preservation. Anything which is pre-existent and eternal is indestructible, let alone having in need of any protection.

And in another place, it is thus stated:

(وَإِنْ أَحَدٌ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ اسْتَجَارَكَ فَأَجِرْهُ حَتَّى يَسْمَعَ كَلاَمَ اللّهِ )

“If any of the polytheists seeks asylum from you, grant him asylum until he hears the Word of Allah.”(۱)

Characteristics such as “originated” (muḥdath), “listening to the Reminder and Word of God,” “sending down” (nuzūl), and “protection” (ḥifẓ) all point to the truth that the word of God consists of letters and sounds; that is, it is a verbal speech which is created and contingent.(۲)

#### ۳. The Ash‘arīs and Māturdīs

The Ash‘arīs and Māturdīs have classified word or speech (kalām) into two, viz. verbal (lafẓī) and intrinsic (nafsī)).

[Accordingly,] the Qur’an and other heveanly books which have been revealed to] prophets of God are verbal word and contingent, but the verbal word is not the essence of the word (or the real word). The essence of the word or the real word is the intrinsic word (kalām-e nafsī); that is, the truth in the self or essence of the speaker which is represented by the verbal word. The intrinsic word with respect to God is the Attribute of Essence and is Eternal.

The main disagreement with the Ash‘arīs and Mārturdīs is in proving the intrinsic word. Once



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۱- Sūrat al-Tawbah (or Barā‘ah) ۹:۶.

۲- Sharḥ al-Uṣūl al-Khamsah, p. ۳۶۰.

it is proven, there will be no dispute that it is essential and eternal. Similarly, there will be no doubt that a verbal word cannot be without any source and that there is something in the human being which the verbal word represents. But the bone of contention is whether or not this truth is distinct from knowledge, or free-will and compulsion.

The proponents of the intrinsic word maintain that sometimes a person reports something which he knows to be the contrary or he doubts its accuracy. Therefore, that which is the origin of the verbal word cannot be knowledge.(1)

This argument is not complete because in the above assumption, knowledge is not assented to (taṣdīqī) yet there is conceptual (taṣawwurī) knowledge. That is, a person who knows the incorrectness of a subject makes a conception of it and relays this conception. The same is true with doubt.

Their other argument is that sometimes a person commands to do a certain thing or forbids it without having the will or abhorrence, as the case may be, to do so. Therefore, the verbal word in the form of command and prohibition cannot be considered originating from will or abhorrence; rather, there is something in the human being which is the intrinsic word.(2)

This argument is also incorrect because in the above assumption, there is no absolute will and abhorrence in relation to the action – to bid or forbid. Without any doubt, in such an assumption the Bidder or Forbidder has a motive, such



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۱- Sharḥ al-Mawāfiq, vol. ۸, p. ۹۴.
۲- Ibid.

as giving trial to His servant and the like. Regardless of His motive, it is His desire or .abhorrence, and it is the origin of His command and prohibition

Yet another argument of the proponents of intrinsic word (kalām-e nafsī) is that in terms of verbal derivation, the speaker (mutakallim) is the one from who the word or speech (kalām) emanates and not the one who originates the word or speech, for the agent of movement creates the movement in someone than himself and yet he is not called the mover (mutaḥarrik); rather mutaḥarrik is that which the movement emanates from. Meanwhile, since the verbal word's emanation from God is impossible, it must be said that beyond the verbal word is another word which is no (other than the intrinsic word.(١

The criticism to the above argument is that in terms of derivatives, one cannot make an analogy. For example, a person is called "killer" who is the agent of killing of another person; the beater is he who is the agent of beating another person; the helper is he who is the agent of helping another person. One can never consider killing, beating and helping accidental to the agents of those actions. It is true that the said actions originate from their respective agents, yet it is not accidental existence .((qiyām-e 'arūḍī) but rather emanative existence (qiyām-e ṣudūrī

The existence of the origin of their derivatives, therefore, is sometimes in the form of emanative existence as well as accidental existence



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.Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid, vol. ۴, p. ١۴٧ -١

at other times. The existence of movement in the mover is an accidental existence while the existence of beating in the beater is an emanative existence. The existence .of word or speech in the speaker is of the latter case

:"The following holy verse is also quoted to substantiate of the "intrinsic word

( وَيَقُولُونَ فِى أَنْفُسِهِمْ لَوْلا يُعَذِّبُنَا اللَّهُ بِمَا نَقُولُ )

"(And they say to themselves, 'Why does not Allah punish us for what we say?!'"(۱)

(In this regard, they have also cited the couplet of Al-Akhṭāl(۲) below (۳

إنَّ الْكَلامَ لَفِى الْفُؤادِ وَإنَّما جَعَلَ اللِّسانَ عَلَى الْفُؤادِ دَليلاً

Yet, such usages are metaphorical and not real and their implication is nothing except mental conceptions and psychic perceptions, and in no way do they prove the .existence "intrinsic word" as a reality distinct from conceptions and perceptions

#### Muslim Philosophers .۴

According to the Muslim philosophers, it is true that the word kalām has been coined for words which denote particular meanings, but the motive or purpose for which a word is coined includes a verbal word as it conveys and points to the motive behind coining the verbal word. This point is not limited to verbal word. Sometimes, by means of signs and the like, one may convey to others his or her message or point. In ."conventional practice, this way of conveying message is called "speech" or "speaking

Meanwhile, there is no doubt that in relation to its agent, an action denotes two things. It denotes the existence of the agent as well as its qualities. On this



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۱- ۵۸:۸ Sūrat al-Mujādilah.

۲- Al-Akhṭal (Ghiyāth ibn Ghawth al-Taghlibī al-Akhṭal) (c. ۶۴۰-۷۱۰ CE): one of the most famous Arab poets of the Umayyad period and a Christian belonging to the tribe [.of Taghlib in Mesopotamia. [Trans

.Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid, vol. ۴, p. ۱۵۰ -۳

basis, it can be said that the universe which is an Action and a creation of God expresses His existence and Attributes of Perfection. Therefore, the universe is a .Word of God

فَالْكُلُّ بِالذّاتِ لَهُ دِلالَةٌ حاكِيَةٌ جماله، جلاله

,So everything essentially denotes Him

(Expressing His Beauty and Glory.(١

**The Word of God in the Qur'an and the Traditions**

In the Qur'an and traditions, the word of God has broad meanings. We shall only limit :to the verbal word, active word and other types of speech

١. Some verses about the verbal word have been quoted earlier. We shall quote here :(a Qur'anic verse about God's interlocution with Prophet Mūsā (Moses) ('a

( وَكَلَّمَ اللَّهُ مُوسَى تَكْلِيمًا )

(And to Moses Allah spoke directly."(٢"

In other verses of the Qur'an, examples of God's interlocution with Prophet Mūsā ('a) have been mentioned. It is stated in those verses that in the valley of Ṭuwā Prophet Mūsā ('a) heard a voice from God, and in this way, God imparted some truths to (him.(٣

٢. :(The Holy Qur'an has named the Holy Messiah ('a) "Word of Allah" (kalimat Allāh

( إِنَّمَا الْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَكَلِمَتُهُ )

(The Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, was only an apostle of Allah, and His Word."(٤"

٣. :The Divine decree is also another kind of God's word

( وَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَةُ رَبِّكَ الْحُسْنَى عَلَى بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ بِمَا صَبَرُوا )

"And your Lord's best word [of promise] was fulfilled for the Children of Israel because

(of their patience."(۵)

۴. Imām 'Alī ('a) has regarded the word of God as His action, saying:

يَقُولُ لِمَنْ أَرَادَ كَوْنَهُ: «كُنْ» فَيَكُونُ لاَ بِصَوْتٍ يَقْرَعُ وَلَا بِنِدَاءٍ يُسْمَعُ

p: ۱۵۳

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۱ - Ḥakīm Sabziwārī, Sharḥ al-Manzūmah. What has been said speaks of the active word and speech of God. Philosophers have also conceived of the essential word and speech for God. For further information, see Ayḍāḥ al-Ḥikmah, vol. ۲, pp. ۵۸۵-۵۸۶.

۲ - Sūrat al-Nisā' ۴:۱۶۴.

۳ - Sūrat Ṭā Hā ۲۰:۱۱; Sūrat al-Qaṣaṣ ۲۸:۳۰.

۴ - Sūrat al-Nisā' ۴:۱۷۱.

۵ - Sūrat al-A'rāf ۷:۱۳۷.

وَإِنَّمَا كَلَامُهُ سُبْحَانَهُ فِعْلٌ مِنْهُ أَنْشَأَهُ وَمَثَّلَهُ.

When He intends to create someone He says, 'Be' and there he is, but not through a" (voice that strikes [the ears] is that call heard. His speech is an act of His creation."(1)

#### The Contingency of God's Word

The "word" (kalām) as God's action – verbal or non-verbal word – is contingent. If one can conceive of a word or speaker in the Divine Essence in such a way that it is not traceable to the verbal and active word, that word shall be deemed pre-existent .((qadīm

However, in view of the fact that the prevalent usage of "word" is the verbal one and that the same meaning is intended whenever a word is used without any exceptional context, it cannot be treated as uncreated. Be that as it may, since the word makhlūq (creature or created being) is sometimes used to mean artificial word or speech, some great religious personalities have not permitted the application of the word :makhlūq to the Qur'an. For instance, Shaykh al-Mufīd has said

أَقُولُ أَنَّ الْقُرْآنَ كَلَامُ اللهِ، وَاَنَّهُ مُحْدَثٌ كَمَا وَصْفَهُ اللهُ تَعَالَىٰ وَ اَمْنَعُ مِنْ أِطْلاقِ القَولِ عَلَيهِ بِأَنّهُ مَخْلوقٌ.

I say that the Qur'an is indeed the Word of Allah, and it is indeed contingent as Allah," the Exalted, has described it, and I do not permit the application of the word 'created' (to it."(2)

#### The Immaculate Imāms ('a) and the Issue of Contingency of God's Word

In the history of Islam, especially during the 'Abbāsid period, the discussion or dispute concerning the contingency (ḥudūth) or pre-existence (qadam) of the Word of God among the



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۱- Nahj al-Balāghah, Sermon ۱۸۶.

۲- Awā'il al-Maqālāt, p. ۵۳.

various currents had reached its zenith, going beyond the level of a purely academic question and acquiring a political undertone. During that time, some individuals would be severely persecuted, imprisoned and tortured for simply believing that the Qur’an is pre-existent. For this reason, this period is also named the “Period of Inquisition” (dawrat al-maḥnah).

The wise stance of the Ahl al-Bayt Imāms (‘a) on this issue was very instructive. On one hand, they did not consider it permissible to enter into a dispute which had political undertones and a source of discord and violence against the Muslim ummah, urging their followers to refrain from it. Notwithstanding this, they would subtly express their view about the contingency of the Qur’an and the Word of God.

Rabbān ibn Ṣalt asked Imām al-Riḍā (‘a), “What do you say about the Qur’an?” In reply, the Imām (‘a) said:

كَلَامُ اللهِ لَا تَتَجَاوَزُوهُ وَلَا تَطْلُبُوا الهُدَى فى غَيْرِهِ فَتَضِلّوا.

“It is the Word of Allah. Do not violate it and do not seek guidance from other than it for you will be misguided.”(١)

Muḥammad ibn ‘Īsā ibn ‘Ubayd has reported that in a letter about the contingency of the Qur’an, Imām al-Jawād (‘a) thus wrote to some of his followers in Baghdad:

وَلَيْسَ الْخَالِقُ إِلَّا اللهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ، وَمَا سِوَاهُ مَخْلُوقٌ، وَالْقُرْآنُ كَلَامُ اللهِ لَا تَجْعَلْ لَهُ اِسْمَاً مِنْ عِنْدَكَ فَتَكُونَ مِنَ الضّالّينَ.

“There is no creator other than Allah, the Glorious and Exalted, and anything other than Him is created, and the Qur’an is the Word of Allah. Do not coin



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١- Al-Tawḥīd, section (bāb) ٣, ḥadīth ٢.

(by yourself any name for it lest you will become one of the misguided ones."(١)

In this letter, the Imām (‘a) has expressed in a subtle manner the contingency of the Qur’an while prohibiting the description of it with such modifiers as "created" and the .like

### The Absence of Lie in God’s Word

Honesty in words and deeds is intrinsically good while telling a lie is intrinsically evil. And God is immune from any undesirable quality. In other words, honesty and truthfulness are among the Attributes of Perfection, and God is entitled to all the existential perfections. As such, He is truthful. In this regard, the Holy Qur’an has thus :stated

( وَمَنْ أَصْدَقُ مِنَ اللَّهِ حَدِيثًا )

(And who is more truthful in speech than Allah?"(٢)"

### Review Questions

١. State the point of view of the justice-oriented theologians regarding the word of .God

٢. Write down the view of the Ahl al-Ḥadīth and Ḥanbalīs concerning the word of God .along with the criticism to it

٣. .State the basis of Qur’anic verses on the contingency of the word of God

۴. Write down the opinion of the Ash‘arīs and Mārtudīs about the word of God along .with the criticism to it

۵. The proponents of the "instrinsic word" argue that in terms of verbal derivation, the speaker (mutakallim) is the one from who the word or speech (kalām) emanates and not the one who originates the word or speech. Write down the problem with this .opinion

۶. State the manifestations of the word of God in the verses of the Qur’an and

.(traditions (aḥādīth

What is the .٧

p: ١٥٦

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.Ibid., ḥadīth ۴ -١

.Sūrat al-Nisā’ ۴:٨٧ -٢

?basis of God's truthfulness

## Lesson ۱۸: The Attributes of Khabariyyah

### point

In an earlier discussion, we have pointed out that some of the Divine Attributes are called "Transmitted Attributes" (ṣifāt al-khabariyyah). These are Attributes of God which are mentioned in verses of the Qur'an and Prophetic traditions, and if we believe in their outward meaning and implication, we will succumb to the notion of anthromorphism and incarnation.

Examples are "settling on the Throne" (istawā' 'ala 'l-'arsh) in the verse "The All-beneficent settled on the Throne,"(۱) "face" (wajh) in the verse "Yet lasting is the Face of your Lord, majestic and munificent,"(۲) and "hand" (yadd) in the verse "The hand of Allah is above their hands."(۳) In this regard, Shahristānī has said:

A group of the predecessors (ṣalaf) used to affirm Transmitted Attributes such as "yadayn (hands) and wajh (face) for God, without interpreting (ta'wīl) them, but they would say, 'Since these attributes have been transmitted in religious texts, we shall call them 'transmitted attributes''."(۴)

Regarding the semantics of these attributes, different viewpoints and approaches have been advanced. In this lesson, we shall state and examine them:

### Literalism and Anthropomorphism

A group of the Ahl al-Ḥadīth who are labeled Hashwiyyah(۵) clings to the outward meaning of such verses, and as a result, they likened God to His creatures and believed in anthropomorphism and incarnation. Regarding them, Shahristānī has said:

"A number of the Ahl al-Ḥadīth Ḥashwiyyah openly subscribed to anthropomorphism and affirm limbs and dimensions, ascent and descent, movement and transfer for God. Moreover, they attributed baseless narrations to the Holy Prophet ('a),

۱- Sūrat Ṭā Hā ۲۰:۵.

۲- Sūrat al-Raḥmān ۵۵:۲۷.

۳- Sūrat al-Fatḥ ۴۸:۱۰.

۴- Al-Milal wa ’n-Niḥal, vol. ۱, p. ۹۲.

۵- On the origin of their earning this name, it is said that they were those who would attend the lecture sessions of Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and they would sit in front rows. In the course of the lectures they would sometimes interrupt and make incorrect expressions and undersirable remarks. Ḥasan al-Baṣrī ordered them to sit at the fringes (ḥāshiyah). As such, they became prominent with this appellation. See Muḥammad Zāhid Kawtharī, introduction to Tabyīn Kidhb al-Muftarā, p. ۲۰. Another opinion on the origin of their name is that they would record at the margins (ḥāshiyah) of their books every tradition they would learn without scrutinizing its chain of transmission (sanad) or text (matn). Ja‘far al-Sijistānī, Buḥūth fī ’l-Milal wa ’n-Niḥal, vol. ۱, p. ۱۲۳.

most of which were taken from Jews, and regarding the Qur'an, they believed that (even its letters, sounds and words are pre-existent and eternal."(1)

:Regarding the notion of anthropomorphism, Ibn Khaldūn(2) has also said

But there were a few innovators in their (ṣaḥābah and tābi'ūn) time who occupied" themselves with the ambiguous verses and delved into anthropomorphism. One group operated with the plain meaning of the relevant verses. They assumed anthropomorphism for God's essence, in that they believed that He has hands, feet, and a face... Another group turned to anthropomorphism with regard to the attributes of God. They assumed direction, sitting, descending, voice, letter (sound), and similar things [for God]... The [people who gave consideration to the anthropomorphic verses] then tried to escape from the anthropomorphic abomination by stating that '.[God has] 'a body unlike [ordinary human] bodies' and 'a direction unlike directions

By that, they meant: '[not as those things are used] in connection with [human] bodies.' This is no defense for them, because it is a statement contradictory in itself and a combination of negation and assertion, if both (negation and assertion) are used here for one and the same concept of body. But if the two differ among themselves and [thus] disavow the commonly accepted concept of body, those [people] rather agree with us that God is devoid [of human attributes]. They consider the word 'body to be merely one of His names (used in a peculiar sense in connection [with Him). Things like that depend on [religious



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.Al-Milal wa 'n-Niḥal, vol. ۱, pp. ۱۰۵-۱۰۶ -۱

Ibn Khaldūn (Abū Zayd 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad ibn Khaldūn al-Ḥaḍramī) -۲ (۱۳۳۲/۷۳۲ AH-۱۴۰۶/۸۰۸ AH): a versatile Muslim scholar considered to be a forerunner of [.several social science disciplines as well as modern economics. [Trans

(permission."(1)

From the two statements above and similar views, it can be inferred that those who believe in the outward meanings of the verses and traditions related to the Transmitted Attributes are of two groups. One group is concomitant with anthropomorphism and incarnation while another group is not concomitant with the same and with such expressions as "a body unlike [ordinary human] bodies," they would declare themselves free from the belief in anthropomorphism and incarnation although as Ibn Khaldūn has mentioned, their offered solution does not solve the problem at all. The second approach is prevalent among the present-day Salafīs ((Wahhābīs).(2)

### Ta'wīl Approach

In the area of Transmitted Attributes, many Muslim theologians and exegetes (mufassirūn) have adopted the ta'wīl approach. Ta'wīl with respect to the verses of the Qur'an has diverse meanings, one of which is synonymous with tafsīr (exegesis). This meaning has been widely intended among the earlier exegetes. For instance, 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Abbās is reported to have said, "I am among those who are firmly grounded in knowledge (al-rāsikhūn fi 'l-'ilm)(3) and I know the interpretation (ta'wīl) ".of the Qur'an

Another meaning of ta'wīl is to interpret a word contrary to its outward meaning. This term is prevalent among the contemporary exegetes and whenever the word ta'wīl is .used without a particular context, this is the intended meaning

The third meaning for the term ta'wīl is for a verse to have numerous meanings some of which are within some others. And one of them is the outward meaning of the verse as



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١- Ibn Khaldūn, Al-Muqaddimah, pp. ٤٢٣-٤٢٤.

٢ - In this regard, see the books written about the Salafīs and Wahhābīs such as

Āyatullāh Ja‘far Ṣubḥānī, Wahhabism (Tehran: Naba’ Organization, ۱۹۹۶), .[http://www.al-islam.org/wahhabism [۱۴

[.See Sūrat Āl ‘Imrān ۳:۷. [Trans -۳

understood by the common people, but its other meanings are only known to God and .those who are grounded in knowledge

The fourth application of ta'wīl regarding the Holy Qur'an is to trace the roots or origins of words which do not belong in the category of word or meaning but rather in the objective or external realities [of the word]. Therefore, ta'wīl is not exclusive to the (allegorical verses (mutashābihāt) and it is applicable to all verses of the Qur'an.(١)

Of the [different] meanings [of ta'wīl mentioned above], what is intended or meant in theological discourses is the second meaning. Mu'tazilī, Imāmī, a number of Ash'arī and Māturdī theologicans and those of other schools of theology have adopted this method. Contrary to what is sometimes thought of, this method is not exclusive to the contemporary theologians. In fact, it had also proponents among the predecessors (salaf). As Shahristānī has said, "Some of the predecessors would interpret (ta'wīl) such attributes by taking into account the compatibility of a word with its meaning."(٢) Rashīd Riḍā has also said, "The leading salaf scholars would sometimes interpret the (outward verses (ẓawāhir)."(٣

## Theological Foundation of Ta'wīl

As a method of exegesis, ta'wīl has a special theological foundation, and that is, in elucidating its sublime teachings, the Holy Qur'an uses parables so as to make these ,teachings understandable to the common people. As the Qur'an itself has stated

( وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الأمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ )

(Allah draws these parables for mankind so that they may take admonition."(٤"

One of the main reasons behind the



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١- 'Allāmah al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī, Al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān, vol. ٣, pp. ٢٣-۴٩.

٢- Al-Milal wa 'n-Nihal, vol. ١, p. ٩٢.

٣- Tafsīr al-Manār, vol. ١, p. ٢۵٣.

۴- Sūrat Ibrāhīm ۱۴: ۲۵.

allegorical verses in the Qur'an is this very principle.(۱) Yet, in order for the human mind not only to dwell on the outward and metaphorical meanings and thus succumb to anthropomorphism, there have been explicit and clear verses in the Holy Qur'an that negate any kind of similitude between God and other beings. It is thus stated,

( لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ )

"Nothing is like Him."(۲)

( وَلَمْ يَكُن لَّهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ )

"Nor has He any equal."(۳)

Whenever one duly pays attention to these two points, he will neither succumb to anthropomorphism nor fall prey to intellectual suspension.

On the basis of this rule, the correct method of ta'wīl can be inferred, the meanings of the Transmitted Attributes can be found out and it can be said that the word wajh (face) in connection with God refers to the Divine Essence. When it is said, "Everything is to perish except His Face,"(۴) it means that all essences and things will perish except the Essence of God. The reason for describing the Essence with the word wajh is that the face or countenance of every entity symbolizes its essence or identity. For this reason, description of their faces is used in order to determine the identity of individuals.

The word yadd (hand) or yadayn refers to the Divine Power. The verse "The hand of Allah is above their hands"(۵) means that the Power of God is superior to all powers and it is the bedrock of all powers. And the verse "I have created with My [own]



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۱- For further information in this regard, see Al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān, vol. ۳, pp. ۵۶-۶۳.

۲- Sūrat ash-Shūrā ۴۲:۱۱.

۳- Sūrat al-Ikhlās (or at-Tawḥīd) ۱۱۲:۱-۴.

۴- ۲۸:۸۸ Sūrat al-Qaṣaṣ.

۵- ۴۸:۱۰ Sūrat al-Fatḥ.

two hands"(۱) means that "I have created Adam with My special power and Satan must not compare the origin of creation of the human being which is earth (soil) with the origin of his own creation which is fire and think of the superiority of the fire to the earth as an obstacle to his prostrating before Adam. Instead, he must take into account the superior power of the Creator of Adam and show humility to that Infinite .Power

The word istiwā implies domination (istīlā) while 'arsh (throne) denotes the Station of Control of the universe. Therefore, the verse "The All-beneficent, settled on the Throne"(۲) implies domination and supremacy of God in controlling the universe, just as the 'throne' in the human context is related to the position of authority and .administering a country

#### Singular and Synthetic Appearance

Concerning ta'wīl, this important point must be borne in mind that whenever it is said that ta'wīl means giving meaning to a word in contrast to to its outward meaning, this is true as long as this meaning is intended in isolation and in a sentence or phrase. In the same manner, a word is mentioned in isolation in dictionaries and its meanings .are stated

But if we consider that word in a phrase or sentence, the metaphorical or figurative meaning is not only not contrary to the apparent meaning of the word but the same meaning can also be understood from the said word, and conveying the real meaning needs a context; otherwise, it will sometimes give the



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۱- ۳۸:۷۵ Sūrat Ṣād.

۲- ۲۰:۵ Sūrat Ṭā Hā.

.wrong meaning

For example, whenever it is said that "The city is in the hand of a mayor," the word 'hand' is never understood to mean one of the bodily limbs. In fact, anyone who can hear it will understand that it refers to administering the city. Even if the mayor has no physical hands, the same understanding will remain, and in principle, giving literal (meaning to the word is incorrect in such application.(۱

**(Postponement (Tawaqquf) and Delegation (Tafwīḍ**

Another method which is used in connection with the allegorical verses (mutashābihāt) and the Transmitted Attributes (ṣifāt al-khabariyyah) is tafwīḍ (delegation). The outcome of this method is that one can neither choose the outward meanings of the Transmitted Attributes as the mujassamah and mushabbahah do nor can one apply the method of ta'wīl as the mu'awwalah do. Some have claimed that the Companions (ṣaḥābah) and the Followers (tābi'ūn), nay the Muslims of the first .three centuries had adopted such method but historical evidence proves otherwise

No doubt, it could never be the method of the Imāms from the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) and a number of the great Companions and Followers to keep silence regarding the allegorical verses and to refrain from expressing any opinion or view. In fact, they .used to interpret and give commentary on them through a different method

We will explain this method of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) afterward. Shahristānī has pointed out that a number of the predecessors (ṣalaf) used to interpret the allegorical verses.(۲) Yes, it can be said that most of the



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Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, Al-Jā' al-'Awām, p. ۵۵; Āyatullāh Ja'far Subḥānī, Al-Ilāhiyyāt, -۱ .vol. ۱, pp. ۳۲۷-۳۲۸

.Al-Milal wa 'n-Nihal, p. ۹۲ -۲

predecessors had adopted the method of delegation (tafwīḍ).(1) Shahristānīs have mentioned Mālik ibn Anas (died ١٧٩ AH), Sufyān al-Thawrī (died ١۶١ AH), Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (died ٢۴٠ AH), and Dāwud ibn 'Alī al-Iṣfahānī (died ٢٧٠ AH) as among the leading predecessors who were proponents of tafwīḍ.(٢)

## Bases of the Proponents of Tafwīḍ

١. The Holy Qur'an has prohibited ta'wīl and considered pursuance of the allegorical verses as a product of sedition-mongering and ta'wil-orientedness:

( فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فِى قُلُوبِهِمْ زَيْغٌ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ مَا تَشَابَهَ مِنْهُ ابْتِغاءَ الْفِتْنَهِ وَابْتِغَاءَ تَأْوِيلِهِ )

"As for those in whose hearts is deviance, they pursue what is metaphorical in it, courting temptation and courting its interpretation."(٣)

And on the other hand, [belief in] anthropomorphism and incarnation is also invalid. Therefore, the path of moderation is indeed that of suspension (tawaqquf) and delegation (tafwīḍ).(۴)

This argument is incorrect because pursuance of the allegorical verses can only be considered a sign of sickness of the heart and sedition-mongering when it is in pursuance of the allegorical as it is, but if the allegorical is correctly referred back to the definitive (muḥkam) and interpreted in the light of the definitive, in this case it cannot be blameworthy. In fact, it can be inferred from the sayings and actions of the Prophet (ṣ), the Imāms from the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) and a number of leading Companions that such an action is acceptable and permissible.

٢. Useful ta'wīl is a conjecture and speculation, and not knowledge and certainty, and concerning the Divine Attributes, one cannot rely on conjecture and speculation:

( وَإِنَّ الظَّنَّ لا



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١- Al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān, vol. ١۴, pp. ١٣٠-١٣١.

۲- Al-Milal wa ’n-Nihal, p. ۹۳.

۳- Sūrat Āl ‘Imrān ۳:۷.

۴- Al-Milal wa ’n-Nihal, p. ۱۰۴.

يُغْنِى مِنَ الْحَقِّ شَيْئًا )

"And indeed conjecture is no substitute for the truth."(1)

This argument is also baseless because cases differ with each other. Sometimes through discussion and determining the context, one can attain knowledge and certainty. At other times, one cannot obtain anything except conjecture and hypothesis. In the first case, we tend to believe in the purport of a given verse with certainty, and as hypothetical in the second case and this hypothetical belief is not legally (shar'ī) shunned because the said meaning – as stated in the discussion of ta'wīl – is understood from the apparent meaning of the Word of God.

Furthermore, belief in the denotation of the apparent meaning of the Word of God is necessary when the proof contrary to it is not obtained because rejecting the outward aspects of the Religion without a reliable context is not permissible. In other words, concerning the allegorical verses, the preferable conjecture is a legal proof.(2)

3. If the scope of ta'wīl is extended with respect to the allegorical verses, the scope of ta'wīl will also be extended in all religious laws and it will end up in esoteric interpretation (ta'wīl bāṭiniyyah) which necessitates rejection of some religious laws.(3)

It is evident that treating as one the esoteric interpretation and the ta'wīl meant with respect to the allegorical verses has no logical basis. On account of avoiding the esoteric (bāṭinī), one is not supposed to deny the truth. Instead, by believing and acting upon the truth, the esoteric must also



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1- Sūrat Yūnus 10:36; Sūrat an-Najm 53:28.

2- Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb, vol. 7, p. 175.

3- Allāmah al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī has quoted this argument from Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī. See Al-' Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān, vol. 14, p. 133.

.be avoided

## (Transmitted Attributes in the School of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a

In the school of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), anthropomorphism (tashbiyyah) and incarnation (tajsīm) are vehemently considered unacceptable, and at the same time, the method of delegation (tafwīḍ) in the sense of keeping silence and not using the intellect in discussing and scrutinizing the interpretation of the Attributes is not approved also. Their method with respect to the Divine Attributes is based upon negation and affirmation; that is, the salient features related to the creatures (makhlūqāt) and contingent beings (mumkināt) are negated from the Divine Attributes and their .meanings which are appropriate to the Divine Station

Be that as it may, tafwīḍ in the sense that the human being is incapable of comprehending the nature of the Essence and Attributes of God and that he must make a pause at this point is affirmed and regarded as one of the characteristics of (those well grounded in knowledge (rāsikhūn bi 'l-'ilm).(١

In the school of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), ta'wīl is also a special method and that is to determine the allegorical verses in the light of the definitive verses, and to determine the use of every kind of rational ('aqlī) or textual (naqlī) hypothesis for elucidating the definitive verses, and the use of every kind of rational or textual hypothesis for elucidating the allegorical verses is not acceptable. The acceptable ta'wīl is that which is done by referring to the definitive verses of the Qur'an, authentic traditions or absolute rational principles. Someone asked Imām al-Ṣādiq ('a) concerning the meaning of "God's



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.Nahj al-Balāghah, Sermon ٩٠ -١

:settlement on the Throne”. The Imām thus replied

This meaning cannot be denied because Allah has stipulated it. However, it must not“ be imagined that the Throne of Allah is settled in a particular place, on which He leans and sits. As a matter of fact, it is Allah who looks after the Throne. His Throne is not located in a particular place but rather encompasses the heavens and the earth. As ,He said

( وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضَ )

(His seat embraces the heavens and the earth.”(١“

Therefore, we affirm the Throne or Seat which Allah affirms and we reject that which“ He negates. That is, we never regard the Throne or Seat as encompassing Allah and He as having in need of a place or another being, but rather it is these creatures which (are in need of Him.”(٢

Mālik ibn Anas (founder of the Malikī school of jurisprudence) was also asked with the same question, but instead of explaining “God’s settlement on the Throne,” he declared posing such questions as innovation in religion (bid‘ah) – “And to ask about it Meanwhile, by giving accurate answer, Imām al-Ṣādiq (‘a) ”.(وَالسُّؤالُ عَنْهُ بِـدْعَةٌ) is bid‘ah practically proved that to ask questions in order to understand religious teachings is a natural and religious right of individuals. What is important is that the motive behind asking is to know what is unknown and not to engage in fruitless acrimonious .disputes

**Review Questions**

.(Define the Transmitted Attributes (ṣifāt al-khabariyyah .١

?Who are these ḥashwiyyah .٢

As far as the .٣

١- Sūrat al-Baqarah ٢:٢٥٥.

٢- Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, Al-Tawḥīd, section (bāb) on the rejection of dualism (thanawiyyah) and atheism (zanādiqah), ḥadīth ١.

Transmitted Attributes are concerned, which method has been adopted by the ?(majority of Muslim theologians (mutakallimūn) and exegetes (mufassirūn

What are the meanings of ta'wīl? In theological discussions, which meaning of it is .۴ ?intended

?What is meant by the theological basis of ta'wīl .۵

State the method of suspension (tawaqquf) and delegation (tafwīḍ) with respect to .۶ the allegorical verses of the Qur'an and the Transmitted Attributes (ṣifāt al- .(khabariyyah

Write down two bases of argument for those who subscribe to tafwīḍ along with the .۷ .refutation to them

?What is the Ahl al-Bayt's ('a) approach to the Transmitted Attributes .۸

.Write down the special approach of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) concerning ta'wīl .۹

## (Lesson ۱۹: Negative Attributes (Al-Ṣifāt al-Salbiyyah

**point**

In view of the fact that God is the Necessary Being by essence, the Indivisible Existent and the Pure Perfection, He does not lack any attribute of perfection. On this basis, .the Negative Attributes with respect to God does not mean negation of perfection

In fact, the Negative Attributes of God denote negation of defect and deficiency [in Him] and since defect and deficiency have a negative connotation, negation of defect and deficiency is tantamount to the negation of negation (or double negation) which end result is positive. That is, in reality, the Negative Attributes of God express the .[affirmation of existential perfections [in Him

Meanwhile, all defects and deficiencies are derived from contingence (imkān) and indigence (faqr). For this reason, it can be said that the Negative Attributes originate from a single negation and that is the negation of contingence and

(indigence. As Ḥakīm Sabziwārī has said, (1)

وَوَصفُهُ السَّلبی، سَلبُ السَّلبِ جا فی سَلبِ الإحتِیاجِ کَلّا أدرَجا

On this basis, when we negate some attributes from God, the point is their defect and deficiency, and not their perfection and excellence. For example, when we say that God is not a substance (jawhar), it is because to be a substance implies three things. One is that it does not depend on others [for its existence] in contrast to an ontic quality ('arḍ) and another is that it has quiddity (māhiyyah). The third implication is that its existence is limited (maḥdūd). That which can be negated from God are the last two implications, while the fact that God does not depend on others [in His existence] is in itself one of the Attributes of Perfection, and it cannot be negated.(2)

In books of theology, some Negative Attributes which are the point of disputes, believed by some individuals, or considered an integral part of beliefs of some sects and religions have been discussed. Among them is [the belief in] a partner, similarity and composition in the Divine Essence. These attributes have been mentioned in the discussion concerning the Divine Unity (tawḥīd) and there is no need to deal with them again. We shall examine here other Negative Attributes:

1. Corporeality (jasmāniyyah). God is not corporeal because in addition to being a compound (murakkab), a corporeal being is in need of a physical place or locus, and this quality is inconsistent with God as the Self-sufficient and Necessary Being.

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1- Ḥakīm Sabziwārī, Sharḥ al-Manẓūmah, station (maqṣad) 3, singularity (farīdah) 2, p. 103.

2- Ibid.

Incarnation (ḥulūl). Incarnation necessitates that a being depends on the existence of its locus (maḥall) and is subject to it, and this is concomitant with the need for others. Whatever has been transmitted, therefore, from the Christians and some Sufis that .God incarnated in the body of Jesus Christ (‘a) or a certain mystic is unacceptable

Union (ittiḥād). Real union means that two things merge together and forms . ٣ another thing and the earlier two things ceases to exist. There is no doubt in the incorrectness of this notion with respect to God. Yes, union is sometimes used in another sense and that is, two things have some similarities, as in the case of two persons who are the same in humanity, or two essences which are one in denotation (miṣdāq), as in the case of body and heat. This kind of union is impossible with respect to God because the Necessary Being and the contingent being are in unison in .existence

It must be borne in mind that in the sayings of mystics (‘urafā’) expressions such as “There is nothing except God,” “Whatever exists is God,” and the like can sometimes be observed. These expressions must not be understood in their apparent meaning; rather, they imply that everything is a manifestation of the Essence and Action of God, or there is no Essential and Independent Being except God, or the said mystic person reaches a state of gnosis where he cannot see anything except the aspect of unity (waḥdah) and reality

ḥaqīqah) of existence and he pays no more attention to the aspect of multiplicity) ((kathrah), and in the words of Sa‘dī,(۱)

همه هر چه هستند از آن کمترند که با هستی‌اش نام هستی برند

۴. Direction (jahat). Direction refers to a point which can be physically indicated, and a being which has direction has a body or is corporeal.

۵. Infusion of temporal things in God. This necessitates that God must be the locus of temporal things which is concomitant with change, receptivity and contingence of the Divine Essence which all necessitate limitation and indigence.

۶. Pain and displeasure. Pain and displeasure exist in two living beings with conflicting features. One dominates the other and arbitrarily affects its structure, as in the case of viruses which are a source of pain in the body of a person or animal. Since a rival or opposite being to God does not exist, pain and displeasure in the above sense is inconceivable with respect to Him. Furthermore, what is meant by abhorrence and displeasure which are applied to God is that since He is the Absolute Goodness and Perfection, He loves goodness and perfection and He dislikes the opposite. Liking and disliking is something distinct from the sense of displeasure and pain.

۷. Physical pleasure. Physical pleasure necessitates corporeality which is impossible to God, but rational pleasure with respect to God is not rationally shunned because its essence is the perception of existential perfection, and since God is the Absolute Perfection and is aware of His Essence, the



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۱- Shaykh Muṣlīḥ al-Dīn Sa‘dī (۱۱۸۴-۱۲۸۳) was one of the greatest Persian poets. Born in Shīrāz, he studied Sufi mysticism at the Niẓāmiyyah madrasah in Baghdad, with Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī and with Shahāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī. He made the pilgrimage to Mecca many times and traveled to Central Asia, India, the Seljuq territories in Anatolia, Syria, Egypt, Arabia, Yemen, Abyssinia, and Morocco. His best known works are Būstān [Garden] and Gulistān [Rose-Garden], also known as Sa‘dī-

Nāmeh. The former is a collection of poems on ethical subjects while the latter is a collection of moral stories in prose. He also wrote a number of odes, and collections of poems known as Pleasantries, Jests and Obscenities. His influence on Persian, Turkish and Indian literatures has been very considerable, and his works were often translated into European languages from the ١٧th century onward. [Trans.]

assumption of rational pleasure in the above sense with respect to Him is permissible although some theologians have regarded it as impermissible to apply to God on the ground that such an attribute or name has not been mentioned in the Qur'an and traditions (aḥadīth). It is worth mentioning that in the jargon of the philosophers and theologians, rational pleasure is called ibtihāj (bliss or ecstasy).(١)

٨. Attributes apart from the Essence. This has been dealt with in detail in the discussion on the Divine Unity (tawḥīd) in Attributes, and its end result is that the assumption of attributes apart from the Essence presupposes that the Essence of God is in need of those attributes and since the assumption is that these attributes are distinct from the Essence, it follows that the Divine Essence is in need of other than Itself, and this is in contradiction with the Essential Existence and Self-suffiency of God.

٩. Visibility (ru'yah). The possibility or impossibility of seeing God is a source of contention and dispute among the Muslim schools of thought. The Ahl al-Ḥadith, Ashā'irah and Māturdiyyah have considered it possible while the other schools of thought deemed it impossible. Of course, that which is disputed is seeing God with the eyes, but there is no dispute about the possibility of seeing God by the heart which are mentioned in the traditions of the Imāms from the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) as well as about a priori knowledge or total disclosure which is indicated in the sayings



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١- Sharḥ al-Ishārāt, vol. ٣, p. ٣٥٩; Anwār al-Malakūt, p. ١٠٣.

of mystics (‘urafā’). For example, when Imām ‘Alī (‘a) was asked whether he has seen God, he replied, “How can I worship God whom I have not seen?” Then, in explaining :what he meant by seeing, the Imām (‘a) said

لاتُدْرِكُهُ العُيونُ بِمُشاهَدَهِ الْعِيانِ، وَلَكِنْ تُدْرِكُهُ القُلوبُ بِحَقائِقِ الإيمانِ.

That is to say that He cannot be comprehended by the eyes by seeing Him but (through the hearts by the truths of faith.(۱

#### The Proofs of Impossibility of Physically Seeing God

To support their claim, those who believe in the impossibility of physically seeing God :have cited rational and textual proofs, some of which are as follows

:First proof: Seeing with the eyes is only possible under the following conditions

۱. The visible (mar’ī) must be a corporeal being.

۲. The visible being must be at a particular place in front of the seer.

۳. There must be a specific spatial distance between the visible being and the seer.

۴. There must be sufficient light for vision to function.

Since these conditions are impossible for God, the Exalted, who is immune from .corporeality, direction and place, seeing God will also be impossible

Second proof: That which can be seen has one of these two states. It can either totally .or partially be seen, whereas whole or partial are properties of a body

Third proof: The Holy Qur’an has also regardred seeing God as impossible, saying :thus

( لَّا تُدْرِكُهُ الأَبْصَارُ وَهُوَ يُدْرِكُ الأَبْصَارَ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ )

The sights do not comprehend Him, yet He apprehends the sights, and He is the All-“ (attentive, the All-aware.”(۲

,The statement “He is the All-attentive

p: ۱۷۳

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.Nahj al-Balāghah, Sermon ۱۷۹ -۱

.Sūrat al-An‘ām ۶:۱۰۳ -۲

the All-aware" is in reality the reason behind the two earlier rulings; that is, since God is the All-attentive (al-laṭīf), the seers cannot see Him and since He is the All-aware (al-khabīr), He is aware of the seers.

## Proof of the Proponents of Ru'yah

### point

The proponents of ru'yah or physically seeing God have two claims. One is that it is possible to see God and that it will take place on the Day of Resurrection. In order to establish the possibility of ru'yah, they have cited two points from verse ۱۴۳ of Sūrat al-A'rāf:

( وَلَمَّا جَاءَ مُوسَى لِمِيقَاتِنَا وَكَلَّمَهُ رَبُّهُ قَالَ رَبِّ أَرِنِى أَنْظُرْ إِلَيْكَ )

"When Moses arrived at Our tryst and his Lord spoke to him, he said, 'My Lord, show [Yourself] to me, that I may look at You.'"(۱)

The mode of argument is that if it were impossible to see God, Prophet Mūsā (Moses) ('a) would not have requested for it because requesting for something which is impossible is futile and senseless.

This argument is complete if Prophet Mūsā's ('a) request for seeing God were serious and that he really wanted to see God. This is while a study of the totality of verses related to Prophet Mūsā's ('a) tryst along with a number of the prominent figures of his community and the request for seeing God on their behalf will make it clear that this request by Prophet Mūsā ('a) was done in order for his community to understand that such a thing is impossible and that their insistence not to have faith in God



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۱- Sūrat al-A'rāf ۷:۱۴۳.

unless seeing Him talking to Prophet Mūsā (‘a) was futile.(۱)

The following expression by Khwājah Nāsīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī(۲) represents the same answer:

وَسُؤال موسى لِقَومِهِ.

“And the question of Moses was meant for his community.”(۳)

( قَالَ لَنْ تَرَانِي وَلَكِنِ انْظُرْ إِلَى الْجَبَلِ فَإِنِ اسْتَقَرَّ مَكَانَهُ فَسَوْفَ تَرَانِي )

“He said, ‘You shall not see Me. But look at the mountain: if it abides in its place, then you will see Me.’”(۴)

The mode of argument is that the mountain’s abiding in its place is something possible and since seeing God is conditional to something which is possible, it follows that seeing Him is also possible.

This argument is correct provided that what is meant by the mountain’s abiding in its place is absolute abiding. However, what be can inferred from the outward meaning of the verse is that it means the mountain’s abiding in its place at the time when Prophet Mūsā (‘a) was looking at it. Instead, what happened was that because of God’s manifestation in it, it leveled off and Prophet Mūsā (‘a) fell down swooning, as the continuation of the verse thus reveals:

( فَلَمَّا تَجَلَّى رَبُّهُ لِلْجَبَلِ جَعَلَهُ دَكًّا وَخَرَّ مُوسَى صَعِقًا )

“So when his Lord disclosed Himself to the mountain, He leveled it, and Moses fell down swooning.”(۵)

The following expression by Khwājah Nāsīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī represents the said answer:

وَتَعْليقُ الرُّؤيَهِ بِاسْتِقْرارِ الْمُتَحَرِّكِ لا يَدُلُّ عَلَى الْإمْكانِ.

“And attaching ru’yah (seeing God) to the abiding of something that moves (in that state) does not imply the possibility of ru’yāh.”(۶)

Those who subscribe to the

p: ۱۷۵

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۱- For further information on the abovementioned verses, see Sūrat al-Baqarah ۲:۵۵; Sūrat al-Nisā’ ۴:۱۵۳; Sūrat al-A‘rāf ۷:۱۴۳.

۲- Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, better known as Khwājah Naṣir al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (۵۹۷-۶۷۲ AH/۱۲۰۰-۷۳): a Persian polymath and prolific writer—an astronomer, biologist, chemist, mathematician, philosopher, physician, physicist, scientist, theologian, and marja‘ al-taqlīd (religious authority). [Trans.]

۳- Kashf al-Murād, station (maqṣad) ۳, chap. ۲, issue ۲۰.

۴- Sūrat al-A‘rāf ۷:۱۴۳.

۵- Sūrat al-A‘rāf ۷:۱۴۳.

۶- Kashf al-Murād, station (maqṣad) ۳, chap. ۲, issue ۲۰.

:possibility of the faithful to see God on the Day of Judgment have cited this verse

( وُجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ نَاضِرَةٌ  إِلَى رَبِّهَا نَاظِرَةٌ )

(Some faces will be fresh on that day, looking at their Lord."(۱"

The reply to this is that since seeing God in the sense of seeing Him with the eyes is impossible, one cannot interpret the word naẓar (to look or see) to mean seeing with the eyes, just as the word yadd (hand) in the verse "The hand of Allah is above their hands"(۲) cannot be construed to mean a particular bodily limb; rather, its appropriate meaning must be sought and in the verse under discussion, it means one of these two :things

۱. Naẓar means intiẓār (to wait or expect) as the use of the word naẓar in the sense of intiẓār is prevalent. For instance, when it is said that "So-and-so is looking for the hand .of so-and-so" it means that he is expecting help or a reward from him

۲. A word such as thawāb (reward) is implied in the verse. That is, they expect for the reward and recompense from their Lord, just as the word ahl (people) is implied in this :verse

( وَاسْأَلِ الْقَرْيَةَ )

(Ask [the people of] the town."(۳"

(The following expression by Muḥaqqiq al-Ṭūsī represents the said reply: (۴

وَالنَّظَرُ لا يَدُلُّ عَلَى الرُّؤْيَهِ مَعَ قَبولِهِ التَّأْويلَ.

On this basis, the traditions which the Ahl al-Sunnah have narrated from the prophets ('a) concerning the possibility of the faithful seeing God on the Day of Resurrection,



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۱- Sūrat al-Qiyāmah ۷۵:۲۲-۲۳.

۲- Sūrat al-Fatḥ ۴۸:۱۰.

۳- Sūrat Yūsuf ۱۲:۸۲.

۴- Kashf al-Murād, station (maqṣad) ۳, chap. ۲, issue ۲۰.

just as the moon can be seen on the fourteenth night of the lunar month, must be interpreted in a different way because seeing with the eyes in its real sense is impossible with respect to God and in this connection, there is no difference between .this world and the Hereafter

And that sometimes it is said that not seeing God in this world is due to the weakness of the human being's sense of sight and that their sense of sight will get stronger on the Day of Resurrection will only solve the problem on the side of the seers and not about the visible or object of sight (mar'ī). In any case, seeing is possible provided that the visible is located in a particular place and direction in front of the seer, and this is .impossible with respect to God

**Review Questions**

١. ?What is the meaning of the Negative Attributes of God

٢. .State the incorrectness of corporeality and incarnation about God

٣. ?Why is the notion of union (ittiḥād) and direction (jahat) about God impossible

۴. .Prove that God cannot be a locus (maḥall) of temporal things, pain and displeasure

۵. ?Why is the physical pleasure with respect to God impossible

۶. ?Can the Attributes of God be considered apart from His Essence? Why

٧. ?Write down the first reason for the impossibility of seeing God

٨. ?What is the second reason for the impossibility of seeing God

٩. Considering the verse "When Moses arrived at Our tryst and his Lord spoke to him, he said, 'My

Lord, show [Yourself] to me, that I may look at You,'" (۱) if seeing God were impossible, ?then why did Prophet Mūsā ('a) requested for it

۱۰. Write down the second basis of those who believe that God can be seen along with .the refutation to it

۱۱. Write down the basis of those who believe in the possibility of seeing God on the .Day of Resurrection along with the refutation to it

## Lesson ۲۰: The Divine Justice and Wisdom

### The Literal and Technical Meanings of Justice

In Arabic lexicons, various meanings or usages of 'adl (justice) are mentioned, and the most important of them are equilibrium and proportionality, equality and fairness, balance or observance of moderation in the affairs, equality and constancy.(۲) In any case, the totality of the said meanings or usages is that every thing must be located in its proper place such that it acquires its due and suitable share from the universe and .its excellences and it does not infringe upon the right and share of others

It can be said, therefore, that the statement of Imām 'Alī ('a) in defining justice – "Justice puts things in their places"(۳) – is the most accurate expression in this regard. The expression "to put all things in their proper places and to grant rights to their owners" which the philosophers have used in defining justice(۴) expresses the said .point

:Mawlawī [Rūmī] has expressed the above meaning in the following parable

عدل چه بود؟ وضع اندر موضعش ظلم چه بود؟ وضع در ناموضعش

عدل چه بود؟ آب ده اشجار را ظلم چه بود؟ آب دادن خار را

p: ۱۷۸

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۱- Sūrat al-A'rāf ۷:۱۴۳.

۲- Al-Miṣbāḥ al-Munīr, pp. ۵۱-۵۲; Aqrab al-Mawārid, vol. ۲, p. ۷۵۳; Al-Mufradāt fī Gharīb

.al-Qur’ān, p. ٣٢٥

.Nahj al-Balāghah, Saying ٤٣٧ -٣

.Ḥakīm Sabziwārī, Sharḥ al-Asmā’ al-Ḥusnā, p. ٥٤ -٤

What is justice? To put [a thing] in its [right] place.

What is injustice? To put it in its wrong place.(1)

What is justice? Giving water to trees.

What is injustice? To give water to thorns.(2)

In analyzing the essence of justice, ‘Allāmah al-Ṭabāṭabā’ī has said:

“The essence of justice is as follows:

إِقـامَهُ المُسـاواهِ وَالمُوازَنَهِ بَيْنَ الأُمورِ بِأَنْ يُعْطىٰ كُلُّ مِنَ السَّهْمِ ما يَنْبَغِى أَنْ يُعْطاهُ. فَيتساوى فى أَنَّ كُلّاً مِنْها واقِعٌ فى مَوْضِعِهِ الَّذى يَسْتَحِقُّهُ.

‘[The essence of justice is] to strike a balance and equilibrium among the things in such a way that the rightful share of each of them is given. As a result, on account of being placed in their right places, all of them are equal.’”(3)

The ‘Allāmah has also added, thus:

“It becomes clear from what has been said that justice is concomitant with goodness because goodness and beauty in the things mean that every thing is such that a person is desirous of, and attracted to it. It is evident that putting every thing in its proper place necessitates such beauty.”(4)

## Justice in the Parlance of Theologians

The concept of justice in the parlance of theology is that it is God’s Action, and its essence is goodness. That is, the actions of God are all good and desirable, and He will never do anything wicked and undesirable, and He will not abandon that which is necessary and good.

Qāḍī ‘Abd al-Jabbār Mu‘tazilī (died ۴۱۵ AH) has said:

نَحْنُ إِذا وَصَفْنَا القَديمَ تَعالىٰ بِأَنَّهُ عَدْلٌ حَكيمٌ، فَالْمُرادُ بِهِ أَنَّهُ لا يَفْعَلُ القَبيحَ، أَو لا يَخْتارُهُ وَ لا يُخِلَّ بِما هُوَ

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۱- Nicholson (trans.), Mathnawī-ye Ma‘nawī, Book ۶, line ۲۵۹۶, p. ۲۹۳.

۲- Ibid., Book ۵, line ۱۰۸۹, p. ۶۷.

۳- Al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qur’ān, vol. ۱۲, p. ۳۳۱.

۴- Ibid.

واجِبٌ عَلَيْهِ، وَأَنَّ أَفْعالَهُ كُلَّها حَسَنَةٌ.

Whenever we describe the Eternal and Exalted as just and wise, we mean that He“ does not do anything abominable. He does not abandon (through bias and prejudice) that which is necessary for Him, and everything He does is good.”(1)

:In this regard, Shaykh Sayyid al-Dīn al-Ḥamaṣī (died 6th century AH) has said

أَلْكَلامُ فِي الْعَدلِ كَلامٌ فى أَفْعالِهِ تَعالى، وَأَنَّها كُلَّها حَسَنَةٌ وَتَنزيهه عَنِ القَبائِحِ وَعَنِ الإِخْلالِ بِالْواجِبِ فى حِكْمَتِهِ.

The statement about justice is a statement about the actions of the Exalted, and all“ of them are good and immune from the abominable things, and He does not abandon that which is considered necessary by His wisdom.”(2)

:Ḥakīm Lāhījī has also said

What is meant by justice is to describe the Essence of the Necessary Being with the“ good and beautiful action and to free Him from an act of injustice and abomination. In sum, just as the Divine Unity (tawḥīd) is the necessary perfection in the Divine Essence and Attributes, the Divine Justice (‘adl) is the necessary perfection in the Divine Actions.”(3)

Other justice-oriented (‘adliyyah) theologians have also used similar expressions in defining justice.

The justice-oriented theologians (Shī‘ah and Mu‘tazilah) acknowledge that in matters related to the Divine Unity (tawḥīd) and justice (‘adl), they are all indebted to Imām ‘Alī (‘a). The definition they have given for the Divine justice is actually taken from the statement of the Imām (‘a) in this regard. When the Imām (‘a) was asked about the Divine Unity and justice, he replied:

أَلتَّوْحِيدُ أَلَّا تَتَوَهَّمَهُ،



1- Sharh Uṣūl al-Khamsah, p. 203.

۲- Al-Munqadh min al-Taqlīd, vol. ۱, p. ۱۵۰.

۳- Sarmāyeh-ye Īmān, section (bāb) ۲.

وَالْعَدْلُ أَلَّا تَتَّهِمَهُ.

Unity means that you do not subject Him to the limitations of your imagination and“ justice means that you do not lay any blame on Him.”(1)

Similar to this statement has been reported from Imām al-Ṣādiq (‘a). For example, he has said:

اَمَّا التَّوْحيدُ فَاَن لّا تُجَوِّزَ عَلى خالِقِکَ ما جازَ عَلَيْکَ، وَأَمَّا العَدْلُ فَاَن لّاتَنْسُبَ إلى خالِقِکَ ما لامَکَ عَلَيْهِ.

Unity means that you do not attribute to Him attributes of defect and deficiency“ which are applicable to you and justice means that you do not attribute to Him anything which is unacceptable for Him to do to you.”(2)

## The Literal and Technical Meaning of Wisdom

In lexical usages, ḥikmah (wisdom) is understood to mean firmness and prevention of defect, damage and destruction. For instance, the rein of the horse is called ḥakamah because it prevents the horse from insubordination and inharmonious acts. The lawyer is called mawlā and ḥākim because he prevents the legally responsible adult (mukallaf) from doing unlawful acts. The judge is called ḥākim because he prevents the abuse and violation of the rights of individuals. Theoretical affirmation is called ḥukm because it removes doubt and skepticism in the mind.

Whenever a thing has firmness and stability, it is immune from damage. The word ḥikmah (wisdom), therefore, is concomitant with constancy, firmness and strength – be it theoretically or practically.(3)

## Wisdom in the Parlance of Theologians

### point

The word ḥikmah in theological discourses is used to mean both theoretical and practical wisdom.

### 1. Theoretical Wisdom

Theoretical wisdom means the highest degree of knowledge about the most sublime subject whose manifestation is the knowledge of God concerning His Essence



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Nahj al-Balāghah, Saying ۴۷۰. Regarding the commentary on this saying of Imām -۱ ‘Alī (‘a), it is appropriate to refer to Ibn al-Ḥadīd and Ibn Maytham al-Baḥrānī’s .commentary on Nahj al-Balāghah

.Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, Al-Tawḥīd, p. ۹۶ -۲

Al-Miṣbāḥ al-Munīr, vol. ۱, p. ۱۷۸; Al-Mufradāt fī Gharīb al-Qur’ān, p. ۱۳۶; Al-Munīr, -۳ .vol. ۷, p. ۲۵۴

and Actions.

إِنَّ الْحِكْمَةَ عِبارَةٌ عَنْ مَعْرِفَهِ أَفْضَلِ الْمَعْلوماتِ بِأَفْضَلِ الْعُلومِ، فَالْحَكيمُ بِمَعْنَى الْعَليمِ.

"Wisdom is indeed to know the best of things to be known by the best of knowledge. So, the wise (ḥakīm) means the knowledgeable ('alīm)."[۱]

### ۲. Practical Wisdom

Wisdom in this sense has the following usages:

(۱) Firmness in action. For instance, Al-Rāzī has said:

وَمَعْنَى الإِحْكامِ فى حَقِّ اللهِ تَعالَىٰ فى خَلْقِ الأَشْياءِ إِتْقانُ التَّدْبيرِ فيها وَحُسْنُ التَّقْديرِ لَها.

"And the meaning of iḥkām with respect to Allah, the Exalted, in the creation of the things is the firmness of control over it and the excellence of decree for it."[۲]

This holy verse provides this meaning of ḥikmah:

( الَّذِى أَحْسَنَ كُلَّ شَىْءٍ خَلَقَهُ )

"[It is He] who perfected everything that He created."[۳]

(۲) The Agent's immunity from abominable and undue acts. In this regard, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī has said:

اَلثّالِثُ: اَلْحِكْمَهُ عِبارَةٌ عَنْ كَوْنِهِ مُقَدَّساً عَنْ فِعْلِ ما لا يَنْبَغى.

"The third meaning of ḥikmah is to consider Him immune from any undue act."

He has then cited the following verses as his basis:

( أَفَحَسِبْتُمْ أَنَّمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ عَبَثًا وَأَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْنَا لَا تُرْجَعُونَ )

"Did you suppose that We created you aimlessly, and that you will not be brought back to Us?"[۴]

( وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاءَ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا بَاطِلًا )

"We did not create the sky and the earth and whatever is between them in vain."(۵)

(۳) The actions of God as having purposes. Ḥakīm Lāhījī has allocated the fifth chapter of the discourses on the Divine justice to the discussion on the Divine wisdom, saying thus:

"Know that if the actions of God,



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۱- Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, Sharḥ Asmā' Allāhu 'l-Ḥusnā, pp. ۲۷۹-۲۸۰.

۲- Ibid.

۳- Sūrat al-Sajdah ۳۲:۷.

۴- Sūrat al-Mu'minūn ۲۳:۱۱۵.

۵- Sūrat Ṣād ۳۸:۲۷.

the Exalted, were without any purpose, they must be futile and for anything futile to ".emanate from the Necessary Being is impossible

## Conclusion

### point

From what has been said about the essence of justice and wisdom in the parlance of the theologians, we arrive at the conclusion that in theology, the usages of wisdom (ḥikmah) are more common than the usages of justice (‘adl) because wisdom also .encompasses knowledge while justice pertains to the actions of God

Meanwhile, the third usage of wisdom in theology is equal to the meaning of justice in theology because the implication of both is that the actions of God are immune from any form of abomination and repulsiveness. In other words, both meanings are related to the realm of practical reason; that is, they encompass the realm of the do's and don'ts. As such, the usages of wisdom in the realm of the actions of God are more .common than the usages of justice in theology

Yes, wisdom in the sense of firmness and constancy in action can somehow be traced back to wisdom in the sense of immunity of action from whatever is impermissible. This is because the lack of firmness and constancy of action is also unacceptable to a knowledgeable, capable and wise agent. For instance, wisdom in the sense of existence of purpose in an action is also a manifestation of the third meaning .((immunity from any abominable action

This relationship and attachment between justice and wisdom in theology has prompted the theologians to usually use

the two terms interchangeably and to mention them together in the discourse on the Divine justice. The expression al-'adl (justice) is common and prevalent among the .theologians

### Manifestations of the Divine Justice and Wisdom

:The general manifestations of the Divine justice and wisdom are as follows

[Justice and wisdom in the creation and management [of the universe .١

This means that God has created every being by considering its essential potential and capability, and according to the intended goal of each creature, He has provided it with the necessary means and conditions to attain that goal. This holy verse speaks of :this point

( رَبُّنَا الَّذِی أَعْطَی کُلَّ شَیْءٍ خَلْقَهُ ثُمَّ هَدَی )

)Our Lord is He who gave everything its creation and then guided it."(١"

:So is this holy verse

( الَّذِی خَلَقَ فَسَوَّی  وَالَّذِی قَدَّرَ فَهَدَی )

)It is He] who created and proportioned, who determined and guided."(٢]"

:It is thus stated in a famous Prophetic tradition

بِالْعَدْلِ قامَتِ السَّماواتُ وَالْأَرْضُ.

".The heavens and the earth were established by justice"

Justice and wisdom in legislation .٢

God has provided the creatures which are capable of receiving rational and spiritual perfections with religious forms of guidance and taught them the religious precepts, laws and teachings which guarantee their needs and nourish their aptitudes through reason and revelation. Another point is that legislation and lawmaking, the capability

and potential of the human being is taken into account and no obligation beyond the human capability is imposed. These two points are also declared in Qur'anic verses.

۳. Justice and wisdom in giving recompense and penalty

That is, on the basis of



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۱- Sūrat Ṭā Ḥā ۲۰:۵۰.

۲- Sūrat al-A'lā ۸۷:۲-۳.

justice and wisdom, God gives punishment and He does not also deprive the good goers of their rewards in the least. He bestows them whatever is due to them and He :has promised to them

( وَنَضَعُ الْمَوَازِينَ الْقِسْطَ لِيَوْمِ الْقِيَامَهِ فَلا تُظْلَمُ نَفْسٌ شَيْئًا )

We shall set up the scale of justice on the Day of Resurrection, and no soul will be“ (wronged in the least.”(1

The word qisṭ (justice) in this holy verse encompasses all the manifestations and :expressions of ‘adl and qisṭ

( شَهِدَ اللَّهُ أَنَّهُ لا إِلَهَ إِلا هُوَ وَالْمَلائِكَهُ وَأُولُوا الْعِلْمِ قَائِمًا بِالْقِسْطِ )

Allah bears witness that there is no god but Him—and [so do] the angels and those“ (who possess knowledge—maintainer of justice.”(2

For instance, one of the statements made by ‘Allāmah Ṭabarsī(3) in interpreting the said verse is that God takes control of the creation (cosmically and legislatively) and (gives reward for the deeds done on the basis of justice.(4

What have been said are the general manifestations and expressions of the Divine justice and in other perspectives such as that of the Holy Qur’an on the concept of justice. Other cases which are within the functions of the abovementioned manifestations can also be enumerated. After quoting the verses of the Holy Qur’an :pertaining to justice in the different fields, Professor Muṭahharī has said

In the Qur’an, from the Divine Unity (tawḥīd) to the Resurrection (ma‘ād); from“ prophethood (nubuwwah) to Imamate (imāmah) and leadership; from personal ideals to social goals, all of these are founded upon and revolve



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۱- ۲۱:۴۷ Sūrat al-Anbiyā’.

۲- ۳:۱۸ Sūrat Āl ‘Imrān.

Abū ‘Alī Faḍl ibn Ḥasan al-Ṭabarsī (died ۵۴۸ AH/۱۱۵۳): a great Shī‘ah exegete - ۳ (mufassir), man of letters, philologist and mathematician of the sixth century AH. He studied under Shaykh Ḥasan ibn Shaykh al-Ṭūsī and ‘Abd al-Jabbār al-Rāzī and trained many students including his son Raḍī al-Dīn al-Ṭabarsī (the author of the book Makārim al-Akhlāq), Ibn Shahr Āshūb, Shaykh Muntajab al-Dīn, and Quṭb al-Dīn Rāwāndī. He is the author of more than ۲۰ works including Majmā‘ al-Bayān lī ‘Ulūm al-Qur’ān (Compendium of Elucidations on the Exegesis of the Quran), Jawāmi‘ al-Jāmī‘ and ‘Ilam al-Warā bi ‘Alam al-Hudā. [Trans.]

.Majma‘ al-Bayān, vol. ۱, p. ۴۲۰ -۴

around the principle of justice. The Qur’anic justice is the counterpart of tawḥīd, the cornerstone of ma‘ād, the objective of the legislation of the prophets, the philosophy behind leadership and Imamate, the criterion for individual perfection, and the barometer of social wellbeing.”(١)

### The History and Motive for Discussing Justice

In Islamic theology, the issue of the Divine justice has an ancient history and it can be said that it has been discussed from the earliest days of the Prophetic mission. In the traditions (aḥādīth) and conduct (sīrah) of the Holy Prophet (ṣ), it has been given considerable attention. Even dialogues about it between followers of other religions and the Holy Prophet (ṣ) had even taken place.

For instance, Shaykh al-Ṣadūq has narrated(٢) that one day a Jewish man came to the Prophet (ṣ) and they discussed many things including the justice of God. He asked the Prophet (ṣ), thus: “Does your God commit injustice?” The Prophet (ṣ) replied, “No.” The Jew asked, “What is the reason?” The Prophet (ṣ) retorted,

لِعِلْمِهِ بِقُبْحِهِ وَاسْتِغْنائِهِ عَنْهُ.

“It is because He knows the repulsiveness of injustice and He has no need for it.”

The Jew asked again, “Has God revealed anything [to you] in this regard?” The Prophet (ṣ) answered, “Yes.” He then recited the following Qur’anic verses:

( وَمَا رَبُّکَ بِظَلّامٍ لِلْعَبِيدِ )

“And your Lord is not tyrannical to the servants.”(٣)

( إِنَّ اللَّهَ لا يَظْلِمُ النَّاسَ شَيْئًا وَلَکِنَّ النَّاسَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ )

“Indeed Allah does not wrong people in the least; rather it is people who wrong themselves.”(٤)

( وَمَا اللَّهُ يُرِيدُ ظُلْمًا لِلْعَالَمِينَ )

“And Allah

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۱- ʿAdl-e Ilāhī (Divine Justice), p. ۴۲.

۲- Al-Tawḥīd, pp. ۳۹۷-۳۹۸.

۳- Sūrat Fuṣṣilat ۴۱:۴۶.

۴- Sūrat Yūnus ۱۰:۴۴.

(does not desire any wrong for the creatures."(1)

( وَمَا اللَّهُ يُرِيدُ ظُلْمًا لِلْعِبَادِ )

"And Allah does not desire any wrong for (His) servants."(2)

After the time of the Prophet (ṣ) (i.e. during the time of the caliphs), the issue of the justice of God was also a subject of discussions and discourses, and as the highest intellectual and theological personality [during his time], Imām 'Alī ('a) used to reply to the questions in this regard and through his close supervision and astute guidance, he would try to prevent any form of deviation from this principle. His discourses on the questions of pretermination and free-will are a testimony to these assertions.

After this period, a new chapter in the history of Islamic theology was opened. The proliferation of different thoughts and ideas as a result of the geographical expansion of the Muslim domain and their interaction with different cultures, on one hand, and the atmosphere of political strangulation during the Umayyad period which led to the severance of communication between the people at large and the Household of Revelation and Apostleship, on the other hand, resulted in the emergence of various sects and the presentation of diverse viewpoints on ideological issues including the justice of God. Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (died ١١٠ AH), who at that time was known as one of the leading thinkers in the Muslim world, was inclined toward the notion of jabr (fatalism or compulsion) (in contrast to the notion of tafwīḍ),(3) in a bid to defend the justice of God.



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١- Surat Al 'Imran ٣:١٠٨.

٢- Sūrat Ghāfir (or al-Mu'min) ۴٠:٣١.

٣- Tafwīḍ: the belief that after creating all beings, God has left them to administer their own affairs and follow their own wills. In other words, it is the upholding of absolutist freewill (ikhtiyār) vis-à-vis predestination. [Trans.]

(He said, "Everything is subject to the Divine decree and predestination except sins."(١)

Qadariyyah (fatalists) also subscribed to this belief. After the Qadariyyah it was the Mu'tazilah's turn. With the aim also of defending the justice and wisdom of God, the Mu'talizah advocated the notion of tafwīḍ.

During this period, the Imāms from the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) – notwithstanding the restrictions imposed upon them by the Umayyad political establishment – embarked on correctly explaining the justice of God, thereby refuting the notion of tafwīḍ as well as that of jabr. Their outstanding students such as Hishām ibn al-Ḥakam(٢) and others had also left no stone unturned in propagating the views of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a).

In accordance with the approach and bases they had adopted the Sunnī Ahl al-Ḥadith would also avoid entering in theological disputes, sufficing themselves with criticism and indeterminism. In any case, they had no specific theological position on the Divine justice, but after Abū 'l-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī embarked on defending their beliefs, they adopted certain theological approaches, and this led to a new development in theological discussions including the issue of the justice of God.

In sum, the issue of the Divine justice has been always a focus of attention and a subject of discussion, and the theological debates in this regard has an ancient history, and the motive behind these discussions is to purge the actions of God from abominable and undue things.

#### The Position of Justice in 'Adliyyah Theology

Although all Muslims believe in the justice of God and regard this issue as one of the essentials



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١- Quoted in Sayyid Murtaḍā, Al-Amālī, vol. ١, p. ١٠۶.

٢- Hishām ibn al-Ḥakam (died ١٩٩ AH) of Kūfah was a well-known companion of Imām al-Ṣādiq and Imām Kāẓim ('a) who would frequently express their admiration for him. He was so strong in proving theological subjects especially the ones related to the

issue of Imamate that many would avoid engaging in a debate with him. Moreover, he wrote many books but none of which has survived. [Trans.]

of Islam, the rationalists as well as the literalists would interpret the justice of God in their own particular way. The rationalists who have interpreted it on the basis of rational good and evil would regard themselves as the real proponents and defenders of the Divine justice and treat those who deny rational good and evil as genuine deniers of justice. As such, they have set justice as one of the principles of their respective schools of thought. Justice is also considered one of the basic principles of the Religion by both the Mu‘tazilah and the Imāmiyyah. For this reason, these two schools of theology are called ‘adliyyah (justice-oriented).

Regarding the importance of the principle of justice, ‘Allāmah al-Ḥillī(۱) has said:

اِعْلَمْ أَنَّ هٰذا أَصْلٌ عَظيمٌ تَبْتَنِى عَلَيْهِ الْقَواعِدُ الإسْلامِيَّهُ بَلِ الأَحْكامُ الدّينِيَّهُ مُطْلَقاً.

“Know that this principle is an important principle on which the Islamic rules as well as the religious laws absolutely stand.”(۲)

In this regard, Professor Muṭahharī has also said, thus:

“Although the principle of justice is part of the principles of beliefs as it is one of the accepted concepts and essentials of religion, in the sense that in the Mu‘tazilah and Shī‘ah schools of thought it is considered part and parcel of their five principles, it is regarded as the hallmark of their schools of thought.”(۳)

#### Review Questions

۱. State the literal and technical meanings of ‘adl (justice).

۲. State the meaning of ‘adl in the parlance of the theologians.

۳. Explain ḥikmah (wisdom) from the literal and technical perspective.

۴. For the theologians,



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۱- ‘Allāmah al-Ḥillī, more fully ‘Allāmah ibn al-Muṭahhar al-Ḥillī (۱۲۵۰-۱۳۲۵): one of the

prominent Shī‘ah scholars who lived in the period of Mongol domination of Iran. [Trans.]

٢- Nahj al-Ḥaqq wa Kashf al-Ṣidq, p. ٧٢.

٣- Āshinā’ī bā ‘Ulūm-e Islāmī (Kalām wa ‘Irfān), p. ٢٥, with a slight modification.

?what is the meaning of ḥikmah

.Briefly state the general manifestations of the Divine justice and wisdom .۵

.State the motive for discussing the justice of God .۶

.Write down the status of justice in the justice-oriented (‘adliyyah) theology .۷

## Lesson ۲۱: Rational Goodness and Evil

### point

The principle of rational goodness and evil has a prominent position in the justice-oriented (‘adliyyah) theology and is regarded as the foundation and bedrock of the discussions on justice in Islamic theology. For this reason, at the beginning of their discussion on the justice of God, the justice-oriented theologians would deal first with .this principle

### An Elucidation of the Rule of Rational Goodness and Evil

:The rule of rational good and evil has two connotations

The actions done by conscious and independent agents have one of the two states: .۱ .(either they have the quality of good or evil (state of affirmation

The human intellect can independently discern the goodness or wickedness of .۲ .(some actions (state of demonstration

Let us explain the first connotation. Two types of labels can be given to human actions, viz. primary and secondary labels. The primary labels differentiate actions from one another in the creational perspective; for example, labels such as eating, drinking, standing sitting, speaking, moving, pausing, and the like do not describe actions as good or bad, and they only have creational goodness. Secondary labels are labels which are derived from the primary labels and on the basis of which, actions are described as good or bad; for example, labels such as justice, injustice, honesty, ,lying, word of honor, breaking of promise, loyalty to one’s oath, disloyalty

.and the like

On account of being the origin of the actions' descriptions as good or bad, these labels are also called muḥassin (bestower of goodness) and muqabbiḥ (evil-generator), and the intrinsic goodness and evil are related to these labels, and not to the primary .labels

Therefore, rational good and evil implies that firstly, in terms of reason, the actions of conscious and independent agents have the quality of goodness or evil while considering their secondary labels. Secondly, the human intellect can independently discern some of these good and wicked acts while others can be known through .revelation and religion

## Theoretical Reason and Practical Intellect

Aql (reason or intellect) is derived from 'aqāl al-ba'īr. 'Aqāl al-ba'īr is the camel's' shackle or the rope tied to the camel's front legs to keep it in its place. Headband is called 'aqāl. Therefore, intellect is the faculty which prevents the human being from digressing from the path of moderation. Of course, the intellect's deterrence function is only to the extent of discernment and judgment and not in actual prevention. What :the intellect discerns are of two types

١. It is beyond the domain of the human want and ability, such as rational pieces of knowledge and perceptions related to the world of nature or the metaphysical world. This type of knowledge which is related to worldview is called "theoretical wisdom" ."and whenever it is attributed to the intellect, it is called "theoretical intellect

٢. It is within the domain of the human liberty and free-will; that is, the voluntary actions of

the human being. This type of knowledge which is related to ideology is called "practical wisdom", and whenever it is attributed to the intellect, it is called "practical intellect."

The intellectual faculty, therefore, is one thing and its role is to know and perceive, but its perceptual data are of two types. Some are related to worldview, and knowledge and discernment by themselves are desirable (theoretical perceptions). On this basis, the intellect is called "theoretical intellect". Others are related to ideology, and knowledge and gnosis are a prelude to action (practical perceptions). On this basis, the intellect is called "practical intellect". In the discussion on the rational good and evil, what is meant is the practical intellect.(١)

### The Affirmers and Negationists

The Imāmiyyah and Mu'tazilah theologians are among the strong supporters of rational good and evil. They are of the opinion that the Divine justice cannot be interpreted except on the basis of this principle, and denial of this principle is considered tantamount to the denial of the justice of God.

As such, they have taken the Divine justice as one of the principles of their respective schools of thought through which they convey to others that they are the only ones who recognize the justice of God. As we have mentioned earlier, the justice-oriented theologians have engaged in proving rational good and evil at the beginning of the discussion on the Divine justice.

Allāmah al-Ḥillī (died ٧٢۶ AH) says, "The Imāmiyyah and Mu'tazilah are of the opinion' that the goodness and wickedness of some actions



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١- What is stated in the text about theoretical and practical intellect is the popular view. In this regard, there are other views. For further information on these views, see 'Alī Rabbānī Gulpāygānī, Al-Qawā'id al-Kalāmiyyah, pp. ٢٠-٢٨.

(can be clearly and axiomatically discerned by the intellect."(١)

Aḥmad Amīn al-Miṣrī writes, "Since the Mu'tazilah have regarded God as just and wise, they have put forth the issue of the goodness and evil of actions."(٢)

Apart from the Imāmiyyah and Mu'tazilah, the Māturdiyyah have also acknowledged [rational] goodness or evil [of actions]. For instance, Taftazānī (died ٧٩٣ AH) has said:

"Some Sunnīs, that is, the Ḥanafīs, are of the opinion that the goodness and evil of some actions can be perceived by the intellect; for example, the obligatoriness of the first obligation, the mandatoriness of affirming the Prophet (ṣ) and the unlawfulness of rejecting him."(٣)

The Ashā'irah are among the main rejectors of the principle of rational goodness and evil. In principle, all those who do not accept and give importance to reason and rational knowledge also do not believe in rational goodness and evil.

On this basis, the Ahl al-Ḥadīth from among the Sunnīs and the Akhbārīs from among the Shī'ah also reject rational goodness and evil. Of course, some Akhbārīs have acknowledged decrees of the intellect in self-evident premises (badīhiyāt), and in other than the self-evident premises, they have recognized the sacred law (sharḥ) as the way of perceiving the truths (both theoretical and practical).(٤)

### Appreciation and Condemnation, Reward and Punishment

The concepts of appreciation and condemnation, reward and punishment are among the concepts discussed in the issue of rational goodness or evil. In this regard, the Ash'arīs have said:

"What we reject in this issue is for us to regard as good action the action which deserves appreciation



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١- Nahj al-Ḥaqq wa Kashf al-Ṣidq, p. ٨٢.

٢- Ḍuḥā ’l-Islām, vol. ٣, p. ٤٧.

٣- Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid, vol. ٤, p. ٢٩٣.

٤- Shaykh Muḥammad Taqī al-Iṣfahānī, Hidāyat al-Mustarshidīn, p. ٤٣٢; Shaykh Muḥammad Riḍā Muẓaffar, Uṣūl al-Fiqh, vol. ١, p. ٢٣٥.

in this world and reward in the Hereafter and for us to consider evil action the action which deserves condemnation in this world and punishment in the Hereafter. However, we do not deny the fact that on account of being a quality of perfection or defect, an action is rational, appreciated, or condemned. We are also of the opinion that knowledge is a perfection of the self and a knowledgeable person is worthy of praise while ignorance is a defect and an ignorant person is blameworthy. Yet, that being deserves reward in the Hereafter while ignorance warrants punishment in the ”.Hereafter cannot be known except through the sacred law

On the contrary, the justice-oriented schools of theology are of the opinion that the nature of appreciation and reward, and that of condemnation and punishment is the same. Appreciation and reward pertain to the recompense of good while condemnation and chastisement pertain to the recompense of evil. But whenever the recompense of good or evil comes from a person, it is called appreciation or condemnation, and whenever it emanates from God, it is called reward or punishment. Shaykh Muḥammad Taqī al-Iṣfahānī has said, “Appreciation, reward and desirability of an action are synomous, just as condemnation, punishment and (undesirability of an action also give a common meaning.”(۱

:Ḥakīm Lāhījī also writes, thus

Know that a voluntary action is to be described as good or bad, such as justice and“ kindness, or injustice and hostility, and there is no doubt that the meaning of the

p: ۱۹۴

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.Hidāyat al-Mustarshidīn, p. ۴۳۳ -۱

goodness of justice, for instance, is that its doer merits appreciation and acknowledgment and deserves good recompense. Since the good recompense comes from God, the Exalted, it is called reward (thawāb). In the same manner, the meaning of the evil of injustice, for instance, is that its doer is worthy of condemnation and blame and incurs evil recompense. And since evil recompense emanates from God, the Exalted, it is called punishment ('iqāb)."(١)

It is noteworthy that as far as the actions of God are concerned, appreciation and condemnation can be assumed but reward and punishment cannot be. Of course, regarding appreciation and condemnation, what can be materialized with respect to the actions of God are indeed appreciation and praise, because an evil act does not emanate from Him. As a matter of fact, all His actions are good, and this is the very implication of justice.(٢)

**Incumbent upon Allah**

One of the concepts dealt with in the discussion on rational goodness and evil is the concept of wujūb 'alā 'llāh (incumbent upon Allah), because those who affirm rational goodness and evil consider it incumbent upon Allah to do good, and they say, for example, that commissioning of the prophets is incumbent upon Him, or to fulfill what He has promised to His servants is incumbent upon Him.

The rejectors of rational goodness and evil strongly opposed this terminology, saying that this necessitates the human being's authority over God so that he could impose certain things to Him, and if this premise is invalid, it follows that



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١- Gawhar-e Murād, p. ٣۴٣.

٢- Al-Qawā'id al-Kalāmiyyah, p. ٣٨.

(rational goodness and evil is also invalid.(1)

:In reply, the justice-oriented theologians have said

The concept of] 'incumbent upon Allah' on the issue of rational goodness and evil]" does not mean 'incumbency' (wujūb) in the parlance of jurisprudence so as to entail such an incorrect premise. Instead, this wujūb means that since God is free from any form of flaw and defect in His Essence and Attributes, the concomitance to the perfection of His Essence and Attributes is that His action is also free from any form of .flaw and defect

Wujūb 'alā 'llāh means the concomitance of perfection in the Essence and Attributes to the perfection in action, and the role of the intellect in this issue is to know and perceive and not to reward and validate. The intellect does not impose the performance of something on God but rather perceives its being incumbent. The source of error of the Ash'arīs, therefore, is that they have regarded theological incumbency as identical with juristic incumbency, and have been negligent of their (literal commonality."(2)

Shaykh Muḥammad 'Abduh (died 1323 AH) has also paid attention to the incorrectness :of this Ash'arī view, saying thus

The Salaf al-Ṣāliḥ (Pious Predecessors) School is of the opinion that nothing is incumbent upon God except that which He Himself has made incumbent, and that which He Himself has made incumbent is that which is demanded by His Attributes of Perfection. Just as reason dictates that it is essential for God to be described with the ,Attributes of Perfection



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1- Abū Isḥāq Isfarā'yinī, Al-Tabṣīr fī 'd-Dīn, p. 171; Ibn Taymiyyah, Majmū'at al-Rasā'il .al-Kubrā, vol. 1, p. 333

2- Muḥaqqiq al-Ṭūsī, Talkhīṣ al-Muḥaṣṣil, p. 342; Ḥakīm Lāhījī, Gūhar-e Murād, pp. 348-349; 'Alī Rabbānī Gulpāygānī, Baḥth-hā-ye Ustād Subḥānī: Ḥasan wa Qabaḥ-e 'Aqlī, p.

for Him to be described with the concepts attached to those Attributes such as justice, wisdom and mercy is also incumbent. But this incumbency does not emanate from anybody other than God because there is no sovereign above His sovereignty. However, the Ash'arīs would quote the Mu'tazilīs in such a way that it is as if they have regarded God as duty-bound and obliged, whereas they do not hold such a belief."(١)

## The Proofs Substantiating Rational Goodness and Evil

The justice-oriented theologians have put forth many proofs to prove rational goodness and evil,(٢) but we shall only suffice ourselves with the following three proofs:

١. Those who do not believe in the heavenly laws also acknowledge rational goodness and evil such as justice and injustice, beneficence and enmity, honesty and dishonesty. If the source of belief in the goodness and evil of actions were only limited to the Sacred Law (shar'), belief in the goodness and evil of actions would have been limited only to the followers of religious laws. Moreover, customs and traditions of nations and communities also differ from one another.

٢. Their acknowledgment of the goodness and evil of the said actions, therefore, originates from their nature or disposition, and since nature or disposition is universal, the goodness and evil of actions are also universal. Of course, considering that the intellect's perception and power of judgment are limited, the goodness and evil of so many actions become clear through the Sacred Law, and those things are not acknowledged by all nations and communities.(٣)

٣. Rejection of



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١- Tafsīr al-Manār, vol. ٨, pp. ٥٠-٥١.

٢- 'Allāmah al-Ḥillī have brought these proofs in his Nahj al-Ḥaqq wa Kashf al-Ṣidq.

٣- Abū Isḥāq Nawbakhtī, Al-Yāqūt fī 'Ilm al-Kalām, p. ٤٥; 'Allāmah al-Ḥillī, Anwār al-Malakūt, p. ١٠٤; Kashf al-Murād, "mabḥath ḥasan wa qabaḥ 'aqlī;" Nahj al-Ḥaqq wa

.Kashf al-Ṣidq, p. ۸۳; Ibn Maytham Baḥrānī, Qawā‘id al-Murād, p. ۱۰۴

rational goodness and evil also necessitates rejection of religiously-recognized goodness and evil. As a result, the goodness and evil of actions will be totally rejected as well because religiously-recognized goodness and evil are based upon the principle that we are assured of the certainty of the Prophet's saying as God-inspired and there is no possibility of being a lie, whereas in such rejection, the possibility of being a lie is entertained. In order to disprove this possibility, one cannot cite any saying of the Prophet (ṣ) as a lie because it will amount to vicious cycle of arguments; hence, the goodness or evil of no action can ever be proved although the existence of goodness .and evil is acknowledged by everybody

Since rejection of rational goodness and evil, therefore, necessitates impossibility .۴ (total rejection of what is good and evil), it follows that it is invalid. As such, rational goodness and evil are hereby established. Muḥaqqiq al-Ṭūsī has expressed this :argument in the following words

وَلِإنْتِفائِهِما مُطْلَقاً لَوْ ثَبُتا شَرْعاً.

That is, if the proof of goodness and evil is only religious (sharʿī), goodness and evil will (totally be extinguished.(1

By rejecting rational goodness and evil, the way to determine the truthfulness of a claim to prophethood (nubuwwah) will be closed, and thus the sending of prophets for the guidance of humanity will be futile, because the way of determining the truthfulness of the claimant to prophethood is the presentation of a Divine miracle .((muʿjizah

Citing muʿjizah to substantiate the truthfulness of one's



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.Kashf al-Murād, station (maqṣad) ۳, chap. ۳, discourse on goodness and evil -۱

claim to prophethood depends on the principle that bestowing mu‘jizah to a liar is evil, and on the basis of the principle that God is immune from any form of undue acts, it is hereby established that the presenter of mu‘jizah in claiming prophethood is truthful.(1)

In rejecting this argument, some Ash‘arīs have said: “Entrusting mu‘jizah to liars, though rationally not impossible, is contrary to God’s way (‘ādat Allāh), for His way and style is not to entrust mu‘jizah to the liars.”(2)

It must be asked, “How do we identify ‘ādat Allāh and on which basis can one acquire such knowledge?” If it means induction (istiqrā’) and study of the biography of the prophets, firstly, useful induction is not certainty (yaqīn) so as for it to be cited on the issue of prophethood which is based upon certainty; secondly, it cannot be implemented with respect to the pioneering prophets. In this case, the rejectors of the pioneering prophets would have been excused because they would still have not known through induction the ‘ādat Allāh regarding the sending of the prophets!

### Rational Goodness and Evil in the Qur’an and the Traditions

Many proofs and pieces of evidence of rational goodness and evil can be found in the Holy Qur’an and traditions (aḥādīth), some of which we shall mention below:

1. The Holy Qur’an has explicitly stated that although they did not believe in the law of Islam, the polytheists during the time of the Prophet (ṣ) would acknowledge the wickedness of their practices, and whenever they would be subject to complaint, they would justify



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1- Nahj al-Ḥaqq wa Kashf al-Ṣidq, p. 84; Ibn Maytham al-Baḥrānī, Qawā‘id al-Murād, p. 104.

2- Dalā’il al-Ṣidq, vol. 1, p. 368, as quoted by Faḍl ibn Rūzbihān al-Ash‘arī.

these as practices of their forefathers and these were consistent with the Divine command. In refuting their notion, the Qur’an says, “God does not order anything indecent; so, why do you attribute to Him something which you do not know?” For :instance, it thus states

( وَإِذَا فَعَلُوا فَاحِشَةً قَالُوا وَجَدْنَا عَلَيْهَا آبَاءَنَا وَاللَّهُ أَمَرَنَا بِهَا قُلْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لا يَأْمُرُ بِالْفَحْشَاءِ أَتَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لا تَعْلَمُونَ )

When they commit an indecency, they say, ‘We found our fathers practicing it, and“ Allah has enjoined it upon us.’ Say, ‘Indeed Allah does not enjoin indecencies. Do you (attribute to Allah what you do not know?”(١

The implication of this verse that some actions are inherently deemed evil, and the human intellect can discern their evil and wickedness is clear. Apart from the justice-oriented theologians who have such understanding of the verse, the author of Al-:Manār has also said

This verse is against those who, with the motive of opposing those who have gone to“ extremes with respect to the dictate of the intellect in what is good and evil, have (totally rejected goodness and evil in religious laws.”(٢

In condemning polyhtheism (shirk), the Holy Qur’an considers it a great injustice .٢ :(ẓulm); that is, it explains the evil of polytheism as a great injustice

( وَإِذْ قَالَ لُقْمَانُ لِابْنِهِ وَهُوَ يَعِظُهُ يَا بُنَيَّ لا تُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ )

When Luqman said to his son, as he advised him: ‘O my son! Do not ascribe any“ partners to Allah. Polytheism is indeed a



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.Sūrat al-A‘rāf ٧:٢٨ -١

.Tafsīr al-Manār, vol. ٨, p. ٥٩ -٢

(great injustice.'"(١

The Holy Qur'an calls to mind that the Holy Prophet (ṣ) is commanded to enjoin the .٣ people to do what is good and to forbid what is evil; that is, actions are either inherently good or evil, and the Divine command or prohibition depend on their :nature

( يَأْمُرُهُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَاهُمْ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُحِلُّ لَهُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَيُحَرِّمُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْخَبَائِثَ )

It is he] who bids them to do what is right and forbids them from what is wrong,]" (makes lawful to them all the good things and forbids them from all vicious things."(٢

For this reason, the Holy Qur'an regards the Day of Judgment as necessary and .۴ negation of it is tantamount to the futility of the [entire process of] creation. That is, it considers self-evident the ugliness of a futile act, and on the basis that God is free :from any futile act, it argues for the need for the Day of Judgment

( أَفَحَسِبْتُمْ أَنَّمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ عَبَثًا وَأَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْنَا لا تُرْجَعُونَ )

Did you suppose that We created you aimlessly, and that you will not be brought" (back to Us?"(٣

Apart from these verses that indicate rational goodness and evil, many verses which express the purpose and philosophy behind the Divine laws and actions also prove .this point

An explanation of the laws and the philosophy behind them makes it crystal clear that the Divine laws follow a set of real and innate criteria, and this is the basic foundation .(of the "rational goodness and evil" rule (qā'idah

The purposes and philosophy



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.Sūrat Luqmān ٣١:١٣ -١
.Sūrat al-A'rāf ٧:١۵٧ -٢

.Sūrat al-Mu’minūn ٢٣:١١٥ -٣

behind the Divine laws are also mentioned in traditions. The book ‘Ilal al-Sharāyi‘ (Reasons behind the Divine Laws) by Shaykh al-Ṣadūq contains some of these (traditions.(۱

### Review Questions

.(State the meaning of the “rational goodness and evil” rule (qā‘idah .۱

.Explain the theoretical and practical intellect .۲

State the viewpoint of the Imāmī and Mu‘tazilī theologians regarding rational .۳ .goodness and evil

Explain the concepts of appreciation and condemnation as well as reward and .۴ .punishment according to the justice-oriented (‘adliyyah) theologians

State the opinion of those who affirm goodness and evil concerning “incumbency .۵ .(upon Allah” (wujūb ‘ala ’llāh

.Write down the first proof of rational goodness and evil .۶

.State the second proof of rational goodness and evil .۷

.Explain the third proof of rational goodness and evil .۸

.Keeping in view a Qur’anic verse, explain rational goodness and evil .۹

## Lesson ۲۲: The Proofs of Divine Justice and Wisdom

### point

Philosophers and theologians have presented numerous proofs for the Divine justice .and wisdom, and we shall deal with them in this lesson

### The Proof of Essential Necessity .۱

Some theologians have explained the Divine Attributes on the basis of “essential necessity” (wujūb bi ’dh-dhāt) and the first theological text in which this method has

been used for the first time was the book Al-Yāqūt fī ‘Ilm al-Kalām written by Abū Isḥāq Nawbakhtī (a theologian of the fourth century AH).(٢) After him, this method has been used in a more lucid and extensive manner in the treatise Tajrīd al-I‘tiqād by Khwājah Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (died ۶٧٢ AH). One of the Attributes which he has derived from the principle of “essential necessity” is wisdom (ḥikmah).(٣)

In light



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١ - For further information on the proofs from the Qur’an and traditions of rational goodness and evil as well as extensive discussions on this rule, see Al-Qawā‘id al-Kalāmiyyah by ‘Alī Rabbānī Gulpāygānī.

٢ - Al-Yāqūt fī ‘Ilm al-Kalām, p. ۴٣.

٣ - Kashf al-Murād, station (maqṣad) ٣, chap. ٢.

of this proof, the Necessary Being in essence has all the existential perfections, and justice and wisdom are among these existential perfections. God, therefore, is All-just and All-wise. This proof establishes all the manifestations and expressions of the Divine justice and wisdom.

**2. The Proof of Special Attention ('ināyah)**

In the jargon of Muslim philosophers, 'ināyah (special attention) means God's foreknowledge of the best order and that essential knowledge is the source of materialization of the beings, and this system is consistent with the pleasure (riḍā)(1) of God. The 'ināyah of God, therefore, includes three things:

1. The Divine Essence's knowledge of the system of being which is the best and complete system;

2. The Divine Essence as the cause ('illah) of materialization of the best system of existence; and

3. The Divine Essence's pleasure for the materialization of the best system.

These three things refer to the very Essence of God. As a result, the system of being has been realized on the basis of knowledge of the Divine Essence and His eternal special attention ('ināyah). Since the conceptual system of the universe is the best system and its objective system is also the manifestion and expression of the same conceptual system, its objective system must also be the best system, and this is the justice and wisdom in the Divine Action.(2)

وَالْكُلُّ مِنْ نِظامِهِ الْكِيانى يَنْشَأُ مِنْ نِظامِهِ الرَّبّانى

(3)

Although this proof has been presented by philosophers in a bid to prove justice and wisdom in the cosmic actions of God, its criterion or foundation also includes legislative and retributory justice.

۱- What is meant by the pleasure of the Essence of God toward the best system of existence is that the system of being is the Divine Action (fi‘l-e ilāhī), and the Action has the perfection of amenity and harmony with its Agent (fā‘il). Al-Asfār al-Arba‘ah, vol. ۷, pp. ۵۶-۵۷, footnote provided by ‘Allāmah al-Ṭabāṭabā’ī.

۲- Ibn Sīnā, Sharḥ Ishārāt, vol. ۳, p. ۳۱۸; Ṣadr al-Muta’allihīn, Al-Asfār al-Arba‘ah, vol. ۷, pp. ۵۶-۵۷.

۳- Ḥakīm Sabziwārī, Sharḥ-e Manẓūmah, “Ghurar fī Marātib ‘Ilmahu Ta‘ālā.”

This is because legislation and retribution are also an Action of God and will be materialized on the basis of God's essential and eternal knowledge. The proof of special attention, therefore, encompasses all kinds and manifestations of the Divine .justice and wisdom

### The Omniscience and Self–sufficiency of God .۳

The most popular proof for the Divine justice and wisdom presented by the theologians is based upon the absolute knowledge and self-sufficiency of God. In this :regard, Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār al-Mu'tazilī has said

إِنَّهُ تَعالىٰ عالِمٌ بِقُبْحِ القَبيحِ، وَمُسْتَغْنٍ عَنْهُ، وَعالِمٌ بِاسْتِغْنائِهِ عَنْهُ، وَمَنْ كانَ هٰذِهِ حالُهُ لايَخْتارُ القَبيحَ بِوَجْهٍ مِنَ الوُجوهِ.

That is to say, "God, the Exalted, knows the evil of the evil [act] and He has no need of doing it, and He is also aware of His needleessness to it. And anyone who has such a (trait will never commit an evil act."(۱

The following words of Khwājah Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī are also an expression of this :proof

وَاسْتِغْناؤُهُ وَعِلْمُهُ يَدُلّانِ عَلىٰ اِنْتِفاءِ القُبْحِ عَنْ أَفْعالِهِ تَعالىٰ.

And His self-sufficiency and knowledge show the absence of evil in the actions of the" (Exalted One."(۲

The initial point of this proof, which is God's knowledge and self-sufficiency, has been established in our previous discussions and its second initial point is also one of the .rationally self-evident facts, as testified by experiences concerning human activities

Criminological studies show that unwarranted acts usually originate from emotional, economic, social, and similar needs, just as in other cases also, unawareness of the evil and unwarranted acts is the cause of commiting such acts. It may possibly



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۱- Sharḥ al-Uṣūl al-Khamsah, p. ۲۰۳.

٢- Kashf al-Murād, station (maqṣad) ٣, chap. ٣.

be said that in any condition that the human being is assumed to be in need, even the most learned of people and the most pious of them such that he would never commit any indecent act, it is not because he is aware of the indecency of the act or he is not in need of it, but rather it is because he is in need of abstaining from it; that is, abstaining from indecency is a source of his spiritual perfection and earns the good .pleasure of God

In other words, need in the human being is something relative whereas God is absolutely self-sufficient. Therefore, one cannot confirm the above argument for the .human being on the discourses related to criminology

In principle, the abovementioned argument cannot serve as a proof because there is no way of proving that knowledge and self-sufficiency are the sole cause of refraining .from indecency, and to claim that this point is rationally self-evident is also doubtful

The reply to this is that even if there is only one instance when a person does something good only for the sake of its being good and refrains from going bad solely because of its evil, it is sufficient as evidence and such an assumption regarding the human being is not an impossible assumption. It is because although he is essentially needy and perfection-seeker, no one can imagine that without paying attention to the material or non-material benefits of a good deed, he would do it simply

because it is desirable, and without paying attention to the material or non-material .harm of a bad deed, he would refrain from doing it simply because it is undesirable

Such an assumption is not essentially impossible. Whenever such an assumption regarding the human being is accepted, it will be accepted through the primary way .regarding God

Qāḍī ‘Abd al-Jabbār has mentioned this objection in this way: this argument is based upon the notion that the human being is absolutely self-sufficient such that he could make a judgment about God on the same basis. This is while the human being can never be absolutely sufficient. Instead, the truth of the matter is that whenever he is situated between telling the truth or a lie while having equal benefit to him, .undoubtedly he will not tell a lie

This point shows that refraining from telling a lie in the said example has no reason except that once a person knows the evil of an act and he is not in need of doing it, he will not commit it, because in the said example, his need can also be served by telling the truth. And whenever relative self-sufficiency in a person hinders him from commiting indecency, the absolute self-sufficiency in God through the primary way (will hinder the commission of indecency.(١

### The Lack of Claimant and the Existence of Ṣārif .۴

The origination of an action from a free agent depends on the existence of a motive (dā‘ī) and the absence of dissuasion (ṣārif). Meanwhile, there is no motive in God to do ,indecency



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.Sharḥ al-Uṣūl al-Khamsah, pp. ۲۰۵-۲۰۶ -۱

because He knows its evil and is also needless of it. In other words, God's self-sufficiency and knowledge hinder and hold back the materialization of the motive for the commission of an act of indecency, and the commission of an action by a free agent is impossible without a motive. As such, origination of indecency from God is (impossible.(١

This proof is actually a paraphrase of the third proof and its keystone is that since God is aware of the evil of an indecent act and He is not in need of doing so, the motive for doing so will not be materialized in God, and as a result, for an indecent act to (originate from God will be impossible.(٢

:Objection

This explanation is based on the assumption that God is an Agent by intention (fā'il bi 'l-qaṣd or fā'il bi 'd-dā'ī), as the theologians so believe. As proved in Islamic philosophy, however, God is not an Agent by intention because this means that the essence of the agent and his knowledge of the action are not enough for the materialization of the action; it rather depends on a motive which is apart from the essence and any motive apart from the essence is not applicable to God. God is the Agent by attention (fā'il bi 'l-'ināyah) or manifestation (fā'il bi 't-tajallī), and not agent (by intention.(٣

:Reply

The above evidence can also be expressed on the basis of the Agent by attention or manifestation in this manner: God is neither in need of a



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.Qawā'id al-Murād fī 'Ilm al-Kalām, pp. ١١١-١١٢ -١

Allāmah al-Ḥillī has also considered it as distinct from the previous proof. See Nahj' -٢ .al-Ḥaqq wa Kashf al-Ṣidq, p. ٨٥

.Al-Ilāhiyyāt 'alā Hadā 'l-Kitāb wa 's-Sunnah wa 'l-'Aql, vol. ١, p. ٢٨٨ -٣

motive, nor ignorance has any place in Him. He is not an agent by intention as such a motive does not exist in Him. In fact, since God is not an agent by intention, and at the same time, He is immune from ignorance and need. Therefore, God is immune from any indecent act.

## 5. Signs of the Divine Justice and Wisdom in Nature

The ontological justice and wisdom of God can also be proved by means of studying the world of nature, for the signs of stability and firmness, as well as innate goodness and beauty are evident in the system of nature.

Since this method is based upon sensory perception and experience, understanding it is easier is for the human being. For this reason, this has been emphasized in the Holy Qur'an and traditions. Now, we will mention some examples of pertinent verses and traditions. Then we will also quote the statements of some scholars.

( الَّذِی خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا مَّا تَرَی فِی خَلْقِ الرَّحْمَنِ مِن تَفَاوُتٍ فَارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ هَلْ تَرَی مِن فُطُورٍ ۝ ثُمَّ ارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ كَرَّتَيْنِ يَنقَلِبْ إِلَيْكَ الْبَصَرُ خَاسِئاً وَهُوَ حَسِيرٌ )

"He created seven heavens in layers. You do not see any discordance in the creation of the All-beneficent. Look again! Do you see any flaw? Look again, once more. Your look will return to you humbled and weary."(1)

Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī has said:

ألتَّفاوُتُ اَلْإِخْتِلافُ فِی الْأَوْصافِ كَأَنَّهُ يُفَوِّتُ وَصف أحدهما الأخَر، أو وصف كلّ واحد مِنْهما الأخَر.

Exegetes (mufassirūn) have interpreted this absence of discordance in the verse to mean harmony and concordance of the creatures in accord



1- Sūrat al-Mulk 67:3-4.

(and order.(۱

( إِنَّ فِی خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلاَفِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَالْفُلْكِ الَّتِی تَجْرِی فِی الْبَحْرِ بِمَا يَنفَعُ النَّاسَ وَمَا أَنزَلَ اللّهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِن مَّاءٍ فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الأرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَبَثَّ فِيهَا مِن كُلِّ دَآبَّةٍ وَتَصْرِيفِ الرِّيَاحِ وَالسَّحَابِ الْمُسَخِّرِ بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالأَرْضِ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ )

Indeed in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of night and" day, and the ships that sail at sea with profit to men, and the water that Allah sends down from the sky—with which He revives the earth after its death, and scatters therein every kind of animal—and the changing of the winds, and the clouds disposed (between the sky and the earth, are surely signs for a people who apply reason."(۲

( وَهُوَ الَّذِی مَدَّ الأَرْضَ وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا رَوَاسِیَ وَأَنْهَارًا وَمِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ جَعَلَ فِيهَا زَوْجَيْنِ اثْنَيْنِ يُغْشِی اللَّيْلَ النَّهَارَ إِنَّ فِی ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ )

It is He who has spread out the earth and set in it firm mountains and streams, and of" every fruit He has made in it two kinds. He draws the night's cover over the day. (There are indeed signs in that for a people who reflect."(۳

There are many such verses, and those cited above are sufficient for our purpose. :Now, we will also cite some examples of pertinent traditions

:Imām 'Alī has said

أَ فَلا يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَى صَغِيرِ مَا خَلَقَ كَيْفَ أَحْكَمَ خَلْقَهُ وَ أَتْقَنَ تَرْكِيبَهُ وَ فَلَقَ لَهُ السَّمْعَ وَ الْبَصَرَ وَ سَوَّى لَهُ الْعَظْمَ وَ الْبَشَرَ أُنْظُرُوا إِلَى النَّمْلَهِ فِی صِغَرِ جُثَّتِهَا وَ



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۱- .Al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān, vol. ۱۹, p. ۳۵۰

۲- Sūrat al-Baqarah ۲:۱۶۴. For the interpretation of this verse, see Al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān, vol. ۱, pp. ۳, ۶.

۳- .Sūrat al-Ra'd ۱۳:۳

لَطافِهِ هَيْئَتِهَا لَا تَكَادُ تُنَالُ بِلَحْظِ الْبَصَرِ وَ لَا بِمُسْتَدْرَكِ الْفِكَرِ كَيْفَ دَبَّتْ عَلَى أَرْضِهَا وَ صُبَّتْ عَلَى رِزْقِهَا تَنْقُلُ الْحَبَّهَ إِلَى جُحْرِهَا وَ تُعِدُّهَا فِى مُسْتَقَرِّهَا تَجْمَعُ فِى حَرِّهَا لِبَرْدِهَا وَ فِى وِرْدِهَا لِصَدَرِهَا.

Do they not see the small things He has created, how He strengthened their system“ and opened for them hearing and sight and made for them bones and skins? Look at the ant with its small body and delicate form. It can hardly be seen in the corner of the eye, nor by the perception of the imagination – how it moves on the earth and leaps at its livelihood. It carries the grain to its hole and deposits it in its place of stay. It collects during the summer for its winter, and during strength for the period of its (weakness.”(١)

:Elsewhere, the Imām (‘a) has said

فَأَقَامَ مِنَ الْأَشْيَاءِ أَوَدَهَا، وَنَهَجَ حُدُودَهَا، وَلاَءَمَ بِقُدْرَتِهِ بَيْنَ مُتَضَادِّهَا، وَوَصَلَ أَسْبَابَ قَرَائِنِهَا... بَدَايَا خَلاَئِقَ أَحْكَمَ صُنْعَهَا، وَفَطَرَهَا عَلَى مَا أَرَادَ وَابْتَدَعَهَا!

So He straightened the curves of the things and fixed their limits. With His power He“ created coherence in their contradictory parts and joined together the factors of similarity... All this is new creation. He made them firm and shaped them accordingly (as He wished and invented them.”(٢)

:In the same sermon, the Imām (‘a) has also said

وَأَرَانَا مِنْ مَلَكُوتِ قُدْرَتِهِ، وَعَجَائِبِ مَا نَطَقَتْ بِهِ آثَارُ حِكْمَتِهِ.

He showed us the realm of His Might, and such wonders which speak of His“ (Wisdom.”(٣)

In other places, Imām ‘Alī (‘a) has pointed out



١- Nahj al-Balāghah, Sermon ١٨٥.

٢- Nahj al-Balāghah, Sermon ٩١.

٣- Ibid.

:the signs of God's wisdom in the creation of the bat, saying thus

وَمِنْ لَطَائِفِ صَنْعَتِهِ، وَعَجَائِبِ خِلْقَتِهِ، مَا أَرَانَا مِنْ غَوَامِضِ الْحِكْمَهِ فِی هذِهِ الْخَفَافِیشِ.

An example of His delicate production, wonderful creation and deep sagacity which" He has shown us is found in these bats."(۱)

## Design and Perfection as Viewed by Scientists and Scholars

Through scientific studies and investigations, mankind has been able today to obtain considerable amount of information about the world of nature and to reveal many instances of spectacular perfection and design in the book of nature. For this reason, it can be said that "Science is the harbinger of faith and the vanguard of the faithful." Lord Kelvin,(۲) a great physicist in the world, has left these immortal words: "If you consider science very well, it will give you no option but to have faith in God."(۳)

Max Planck,(۴) a scientist who had knowledge of some secrets of the atom, said, "Religion and natural sciences jointly fight against doubt, atheism and superstition, and their stimulator has been always God."(۵)

## Design in the Plant Kingdom

The materials used for growing plants are taken from the air and soil, and fertile soil is composed of mineral substances which have great amount of organiz materials which come from the remnants of the primary plants and animals... The existence of water, air, light, and chemical elements contributes as a whole in the growth of a plant, but this is not enough. In fact, that which makes the growth of plant possible is a mysterious energy which is hidden in the seed and begins to act at the



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۱- Ibid., Sermon ۱۵۵.

۲- Lord Kelvin, more fully William Thomson, ۱st Baron Kelvin (۱۸۲۴ – ۱۹۰۷): a Belfast-born British mathematical physicist and engineer who is widely known for determining the correct value of absolute zero as approx. -۲۷۳ Celsius. [Trans.]

۳ - John Clove Monsma (ed.), Ithbāt-e Wujūd-e Khudā (The Evidence of God in an Expanding Universe), trans. Aḥmad Ārām, ۴th ed., p. ۳۹.

۴ - Max Karl Ernst Ludwig Planck (۱۸۵۸-۱۹۴۷): a German physicist, father of quantum physics, and winner of the ۱۹۱۸ Nobel Prize for physics. [Trans.]

۵ - Ithbāt-e Wujūd-e Khudā (The Evidence of God in an Expanding Universe), p. ۲۸۶.

appropriate time. This energy's action begins with a somehow complex yet .harmonious interaction

At the initial stage, two tiny cells of seed, each of which consisting of different elements and having diverse functions, jointly begin to work but afterward, each of them will take its own way to growth and development. The fruit of every seed which falls onto the ground and grows is exactly similar to that of the plant from which the seed originates. If a clear-sighted eye takes a look at these functions and processes of growth and development of the seed, a world of beauty, harmony, design, and .order can be observed

This design and order can also be observed in tall plants and giant trees, and all plants – regardless of difference in outward forms – have common functions. For example, one of them is that of a combination of light through whose radiance the plants acquire food for themselves from carbonic acid light and water. Another is the structure and function of the root, stem, leaf, and flower. A third example is the reaction of plants in facing external instigations. For instance, they will become soft when exposed to light, or they will fade and become dry when they are deprived of light and oxygen. These are laws which regulate the plant kingdom.(۱)

**Factors that Contribute to the Suitability of the Earth for Living**

By enumerating the factors that contribute to the suitability of the earth for living, Frank Allen,(۲) a bio-physicist professor, has proved the baselessness of the notion of accident in the emergence



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۱- Ibid., pp. ۲۲۸-۲۳۰.

۲- John "Jack" Frank Allen (۱۹۰۸-۲۰۰۱): a Canadian-born physicist who discovered, along with Pyotr Leonidovich Kapitsa and Don Misener, the superfluid phase of matter in ۱۹۳۷ using liquid helium in the Royal Society Mond Laboratory in Cambridge, England. [Trans.]

:of the universe. The said conditions are as follows

The earth is a planet which is freely in equilibrium in the outerspace and rotates .١ daily in its own orbit, thereby giving rise to the day and night. At the same time, it revolves around the sun annually. These movements cause the maintenance of ...equilibrium and stability in the earth's axis in the outerspace

The atmosphere which consists of gases that protect the earth's surface is so thick .٢ and dense (approximately ٨٠٠ kilometers) that it could keep the earth safe from the deadly falling of twenty million meteorites daily with a speed of approximately fifty .kilometers per second

Moreover, the atmosphere keeps the temperature of the earth's surface suitable .٣ for life, and it also transfers very essential amount of water and water vapor from the oceans to the arid parts of the earth. Without this, all the continents would have turned into deserts not suitable for living. As such, it must be said that the oceans and .the atmosphere are considered flywheels for the earth

The remarkable properties of water have a significant role in making life possible in .۴ oceans, seas and rivers during long winters. One of these properties is the ability to draw large amounts of oxygen in low temperature degrees. Another is that its density in four degrees of temperature is freezing point, and for this reason, the water at the bottom of the oceans and rivers remains liquid. The third [property] is that the density of

snow is less than that of water and thus it remains on the surface of the water and does not sink. The fourth [property] is that once the water becomes solid, it emits a large amount of heat.

۵. The soil in itself has special mineral elements which are absorbed by the plants and turn into edible materials needed by the animals.

۶. The existence of metals just beneath the earth's surface has made possible the various arts which are products of human civilizations.

۷. Regarding the size of the earth, if it were as big as the moon and its diameter were only one-fourth of its present diameter, the gravitational force would have been sufficient to keep its waters and air on it and its temperature would have fatally done up. If our planet were only as big as the sun while it could have still kept its density, the gravitational force would have been ۱۵۰ times stronger, the atmosphere's altitude would have been ten kilometers lower, boiling of water would have been impossible, the air pressure would have reached approximately ۱۵۰ kilograms per square centimeter, a kilogram of worms would have weighed ۱۵۰ kilograms, and the human organ would have become as small of that of a squirrel.

۸. Concerning the distance of the earth from the sun, if the earth's distance from the sun were two times its present distance, its heat that reaches the earth would have tremendously decreased, the speed of the earth movement along its orbit would

have been half, the length of winter would have doubled, and therefore, all living .creatures would have been frozen

If the earth's distance from the sun were half [the present distance], the temperature would have been four times, the speed of movement along its orbit would have been doubled, and the length of seasons would have been half [if ever it were possible to have any change in season] and the earth would have been in burning temperature in (which life will be impossible.(۱

These are examples of spectacular greatness, wonderful design and exact laws that govern the world of nature. Many things have been said about these and many examples of them have been presented in the book Ithbāt-e Wujūd-e Khudā (The Evidence of God in an Expanding Universe). In order to make the discussion brief, we will refrain from mentioning those examples here. For the fair-minded and wise person, what have been said so far, nay even less than these, are enough for him to .constitute a book of knowledge about the Origin of creation

برگ درختان سبز در نظر هوشیار هر ورقش دفتریست معرفت کردگار

For the conscious, each leaf of the green trees

.Is a book of knowledge about the Creator

**Review Questions**

.State the first proof of the justice of God .۱

.State the proof of special attention ('ināyah) about the justice of God .۲

.State the third proof of the justice of God .۳

.Write down the fourth proof of the justice of God .۴

Write down the objection to the third proof of .۵

.Ithbāt-e Wujūd-e Khudā (The Evidence of God in an Expanding Universe), pp. ۱۹-۲۲ -۱

.the justice of God, and the refutation to it

.Write down the objection to the fourth proof and the refutation to it .۶

?How can the cosmic justice and wisdom of God be proved .۷

## Lesson ۲۳: The Creation as Goal-oriented

### point

We have said earlier that one of the meanings of ḥikmah (wisdom) is the goal-orientedness of an action. The goal-orientedness of an action is one of the characteristics of a wise agent (fā'il). Those theologians who believe in the principle of rational goodness and evil and have interpreted the Divine justice and wisdom on the basis of this principle have emphasized the goal-orientedness of creation, maintaining that the actions of God are based upon a purpose. Those who reject the [principle of] rational goodness and evil, however, do not believe in the actions of God as being .based upon a purpose

### The Justice-oriented Argument

The basis of the justice-oriented ('adliyyah) theologians in saying that the actions of God have a purpose is that an action which is devoid of any purpose(۱) and motive is futile and abominable, and God is immune from any abominable action. As Muḥaqqiq ,al-Ṭūsī has said

وَنَفْيُ الْغَرَضِ يَسْتَلزِمُ الْعَبَث.

(And the negation of motive necessitates futility."(۲"

This is countered by the argument that the agent that pursues a purpose or motive in his action has a defect and through this purpose or motive, he tries to recompensate for this defect, because purpose or motive connotes that its existence is preferable to its non-existence for the agent, and this signifies the agent's desire for perfection ((istikmāl).(۳

[The justice-oriented [theologians



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۱- The difference between purpose (ghāyah) and motive (gharaḍ) is that motive is a specific purpose and it means the purpose behind the action of an agent that has free-will. See Sharḥ al-Ishārāt, vol. ۳, p. ۱۴۹.

۲- Kashf al-Murād, station (maqṣad) ۳, chap. ۳.

۳- Sharḥ al-Mawāqif, vol. ۸, pp. ۲۰۲-۲۰۳.

have given their reply by saying that the existence of purpose in an action connotes the agent's compensation for his defect and desire for perfection when the purpose of action is traceable to the agent. But if the purpose is not traceable to the agent, this does not connote the agent's compensation for his defect and desire for perfection. As Muḥaqqiq al-Ṭūsī has said in continuation to his earlier expression,

وَلا يَلْزَمُ عَوْدُهُ إلَيْهِ.

That is to say that the motive for the actions of God is not necessarily traceable to Him. In fact, the motive for His actions is related to the creatures.(١)

### The Ash'arī's Objection

#### point

The Ash'arīs have not accepted this reply, saying that tracing the benefit and purpose behind an action to other than God is either of the two cases. First is that for the action to benefit or not benefit others is the same for God, and the other is that these two differ from each other, and benefiting others takes precedence and more suitable to God. The first assumption is invalid and giving preference to the less preferable while the second assumption necessitates desire for perfection (istikmāl) because for God to give priority to benefiting others is a form of desire for perfection and desire for perfection, in whatever form it takes, is impossible for God.(٢)

#### Reply

Giving priority or preference does not necessitate desire for perfection (istikmāl) but it is rather more general than that because the meaning of the agent's giving of preference to an action is that the



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١- Ibid., p. ٢٠٣.

٢- Sharḥ al-Mawāqif, vol. ٨, p. ٢٠٣.

action is consistent with the traits and characteristics of the agent. Now, if the Agent is the Self-sufficient by essence (al-ghanī bi 'dh-dhāt) and All-wise (al-ḥakīm), what is priority for Him is that His action must have a purpose and this purpose is meant for other than Him. And if the agent is inherently indigent (faqīr bi 'dh-dhāt), what is priority for him in his action is that which could compensate for his defect and address .his desire for perfection

## Another Objection

### point

For an action to have a purpose necessitates that apart from the agent and his action, there must be another entity which is to be called "purpose". That is, the action is the medium for the materialization of the purpose. This assumption cannot be applied to God and His actions because all creatures are His actions, and for this reason, there is no difference between them in that some are to be regarded as the medium and others as the purpose. In fact, without any intermediary, they are all creatures of (God.(١

### Reply

First of all, this notion that without any intermediary all beings are created by God, is not consistent with reason and experience, or clear religious texts. The principle of causation or cause-and-effect relationship which is one of the self-evident rational principles is confirmed by both revelation and experience. Some creatures are means for the emergence of other creatures, therefore, albeit the Creator by essence is no other than God and the chain of causes and effects finally ends up



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.Ibid., vol. ٨, pp. ٢٠٣-٢٠۴ -١

.with Him

Secondly, even if we do not accept the causality of some creatures for others, that all beings are created by God is in no way contradictory to the assumption that some of them serve as the purpose or motive of others or some are in the service of others. It is true that from a general perspective of the world that the universe is created by God, there is no agent and goal in the universe except Him, but from a specific or micro-level perspective, we can obviously find out that some creatures or phenomena are the service of some others while some serve as the goal of some .others

For instance, we can clearly see this reality by comparing the mother and the child. Some emotionally and physically traits of the mother are totally compatible with the needs of the child so much so that the child's survival depends on the existence of these traits. We can also observe and discern such relationship between natural phenomena and human life, and in essence, the ultimate design which governs the .world of nature has no other purpose except this

### The Goal of Action and the Goal of Agent

A point which may possibly be the source of mistake by the rejectors of the goal-orientedness of the universe is to consider identical the goal of action and the goal of the agent, treating them as concomitant to each other, whereas this is not so. The .goal-orientedness of an action is more general than that of an agent

That is, whenever the

agent is goal-oriented, his action will also be goal-oriented, but the opposite is not necessarily true. It can be assumed that the Agent is the Self-sufficient by essence and His Being has no goal beyond Himself but His action is goal-oriented. That is, some of His actions serve as the goal of another set of His actions. Although there may be no goal beyond Him for the totality of His actions, the action is goal-oriented .whether this goal is the Agent Himself or something else

### The Third View

One of the Ash'arī theologians has adopted a third view on this issue. That is, he has accepted partly that the actions of God are caused by certain goals but rejected the same in totality. In this regard, Sa'd al-Dīn al-Taftazānī has thus said that the truth is that explaining some actions, particularly religious laws, through the lens of expediencies and wisdom is something self-evident; for instance, the incumbency of prescribed punishments (ḥudūd) and retributions (kaffārāt), and the unlawfulness of intoxicants and the like, as also testified by religious texts. The Holy Qur'an has :stated, thus

( وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ )

"I did not create the jinn and humans except that they may worship Me."(١)

( مِنْ أَجْلِ ذَلِكَ كَتَبْنَا عَلَى بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ )

"That is why We decreed for the Children of Israel."(٢)

( فَلَمَّا قَضَى زَيْدٌ مِنْهَا وَطَرًا زَوَّجْنَاكَهَا لِكَيْ لا يَكُونَ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ حَرَجٌ )

"So when Zayd had got through with her, We wedded her to you, so that there may be no blame



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١- Sūrat al-Dhāriyāt ٥١:٥٦.

٢- Sūrat al-Mā'idah ٥:٣٢.

(on the faithful."(١

Continuing further, to make generalizations and establish the view that none of the actions of God is devoid of a goal and motive is worthy of discussion and reflection.(٢

It is to be noted that the question of goal-orientedness of the actions of God is not an issue pertaining to the acts of worship such that it is sufficient that instances of it are mentioned in religious texts. It is rather a rational question, and rational laws cannot be specified.

## The View of Theosophers

The commentator of Al-Mawāqif has regarded the view of Muslim theosophers as compatible with the Ashʻarī viewpoint on the question of goal-orientedness of the actions of God, and thus said after quoting the Ashʻarī viewpoint: (٣

وَ وافَقَهُمْ عَلىٰ ذٰلِکَ جهابذهُ الْحُکَماءِ وَطَوائِفُ الإِلهين.

This understanding of the words of theosophers is not correct. For instance, Ṣadr al-Muta'allihīn has said:

"The theosophers have not generally negated a goal or motive from the actions of God. What they have rejected is the existence of goal or motive apart from the Divine Essence for the Absolute Being and for His first action. They have affirmed special goals, however, for special or particular actions. For instance, their books are replete with discourses about the utility and purpose behind the creatures."(٤

## Motive and Exigency

Concerning this issue, some researchers have made distinction between motive (gharaḍ) and exigency (maṣlaḥah), saying that what can be said about the actions of God is that they have benefits (maṣāliḥ) and wisdom (ḥikmah) but these are not caused by motives.

The difference between motive and exigency

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۱- Sūrat al-Aḥzāb ۳۳:۳۷.

۲- Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid, vol. ۴, pp. ۳۰۲-۳۰۳.

۳- Sharḥ al-Mawāqif, vol. ۶, p. ۲۰۲.

۴- Al-Asfār al-Arba‘ah, vol. ۷, p. ۸۴.

is that motive is traceable to the agent while exigency pertains to others. It is said, therefore, that the actions of God are caused by motives; it is a kind of figurative speech, likening the actions of God to those of humans. That is, benefits and wisdom result from the actions of God and if they result from the actions of man, they will be (considered the motive and goal of his actions.(١

It is to be noted that the result of this examination can be traced back to the distinction between the goal-orientedness of the action and the goal-orientedness of the agent which we have mentioned earlier. That is, the actions of God – both cosmic and legislative – have certain benefits, exigencies and wisdom for the creatures and .not for God

For this reason, God is not an agent by motive or goal (fā'il bi 'd-dā'ī wa bi 'l-qaṣd) but rather the Agent by satisfaction (bi 'r-riḍā') or special attention (bi 'l-'ināyah), as has been proved in philosophy. And God's agency (fā'iliyyah) is not dependent on a motive or intention which is separate from the Essence because if it is so, His Agency will not be essential (bi 'dh-dhāt) and whatever pertains to the essential knowledge of God is not an absolute action but rather an action characterized by wisdom and expediency. .In conclusion, while it is not an action by motive, His action is goal-oriented

### The Qur'an and the Goal–orientedness of the Universe

Verses of the Qur'an explicitly support the goal-orientedness of the universe, as it



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.Sarmāyeh-ye Īmān, p. ٧۴ -١

has thus stated:

( وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا إِلا بِالْحَقِّ )

“We did not create the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them except with reason.”(۱)

( وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا لَعِبِينَ )

“We did not create the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them for play.”(۲)

( مَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا إِلا بِالْحَقِّ وَأَجَلٍ مُسَمًّى )

“We did not create the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them except with reason and for a specified term.”(۳)

( وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاءَ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا بَاطِلًا )

“We did not create the sky and the earth and whatever is between them in vain.”(۴)

The implication of these verses is that the world of nature has been created with reason and vainness has no place in it, and its creation has not been for play and futility. And this fact dictates that the movement in the universe will one day come to an end and attain its desired end or goal. That goal will be reflected in the other world.(۵)

Apart from these quoted verses which signify the goal-orientedness of the entire universe, other verses speak about the goal-orientedness of the life of human being and other creatures. In many verses of the Qur’an, man’s life and his culmination are regarded as the motive or goal behind the creation of the earth and the bounties of nature. It thus says for instance:

( هُوَ الَّذِى خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مَا فِى الأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا )

“It is He who created for you all that is

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۱- Sūrat al-Ḥijr ۱۵:۸۵.

۲- Sūrat al-Anbiyā’ ۲۱:۱۶.

۳- Sūrat al-Aḥqāf ۴۶:۳.

۴- Sūrat Ṣād ۳۸:۲۷.

۵- Al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qur’ān, vol. ۱۶, p. ۱۵۸.

(in the earth."(1)

( وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِمَّا خَلَقَ ظِلالا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الْجِبَالِ أَكْنَانًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ سَرَابِيلَ تَقِيكُمُ الْحَرَّ وَسَرَابِيلَ تَقِيكُمْ بَأْسَكُمْ كَذَلِكَ يُتِمُّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُسْلِمُونَ )

It is Allah who has made for you shade from what He created, and made for you" retreats in the mountains, and made for you garments that protect you from heat and garments that protect you from your [mutual] violence. That is how He completes His (blessing upon you so that you may submit [to Him]."(2)

Regarding the fact that the creation of man is not in vain and the purpose behind his :creation will be realized in the other world, it thus says

( أَفَحَسِبْتُمْ أَنَّمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ عَبَثًا وَأَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْنَا لاَ تُرْجَعُونَ )

Did you suppose that We created you aimlessly, and that you will not be brought" (back to Us?"(3)

Man's attainment of the said ultimate goal depends on the realization of other goals which include trial and test, worship and devotion to God, submission and obedience :to Him. The following verses express these goals

( إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا مَا عَلَى الأَرْضِ زِينَةً لَهَا لِنَبْلُوَهُمْ أَيُّهُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلا )

Indeed We have made whatever is on the earth an adornment for it that We may" (test them [to see] which of them is best in conduct."(4)

( وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ )

(I did not create the jinn and humans except that they may worship Me."(5"

( كَذَلِكَ يُتِمُّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُسْلِمُونَ )

That is how He completes His blessing upon you so that you may submit [to"

١- ٢:٢٩ Sūrat al-Baqarah.

٢- ١٦:٨١ Sūrat al-Nahl.

٣- ٢٣:١١٥ Sūrat al-Mu’minūn.

٤- ١٨:٧ Sūrat al-Kahf.

٥- ٥١:٥٦ Sūrat al-Dhāriyāt.

(Him].”(1)

## The Perfect Man as the Philosophy behind Creation

It can be deduced from the above verses that the human being is the motive or goal behind the creation of the universe but not on the basis of his material or physical life. That may be so for in this perspective, it has no superiority to other creatures in that it is the goal behind their creation. It is rather from the perspective of spiritual life and special perfection which can be obtained through devotion and servitude to God.

This point can be clearly inferred from the expression “that We may test them [to see] which of them is best in conduct” for the implication of this statement is that the purpose behind the creation of the universe is through the excellence and superiority of action. For instance, this Sacred Tradition (ḥadīth al-qudsī) (2) which is addressed to the Holy Prophet (ṣ) speaks about this fact:

لَوْلاکَ لَما خَلَقْتُ الأَفْلاکَ.

“Had it not been for you, I would not have created the heavenly firmaments.”(3)

## Review Questions

1. Write down the argument of the justice-oriented (‘adliyyah) theologians on the goal-orientedness of the actions of God.

2. Write down the first objection of the Ash‘arīs on the goal-orientedness of the actions of God along with the refutation to it.

3. Write down the second objection of the Ash‘arīs on the goal-orientedness of the actions of God along with the refutation to it.

4. What does it mean by the goal of the action and the goal of the agent? Which one is meant by the goal-orientedness of the actions of

۱- Sūrat al-Nahl ۱۶:۸۱.

۲- Ḥadīth Qudsī (or Sacred Ḥadīth): a sub-category of ḥadīth, which are sayings of God but differ from the Qur’an as they are expressed in the words of Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ). [Trans.]

۳- Al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qur’ān, vol. ۱۰, p. ۱۵۲.

?God

What is the Muslim theosophers' view on the goal-orientedness of the actions of .۵ ?God

Cite two verses of the Qur'an to substantiate the goal-orientedness of the actions .۶ .of God

.Write down three verses of the Qur'an about the goal-orientedness of human life .۷

## Lesson ۲۴: Evil and the Best Order

### point

One of the perennial central discussions in theology is the question of evil which is talked about in different topics. One of the topics in which it is discussed is the Divine Unity (tawḥīd) in creatorship (khāliqiyyah) because the dualists believe in two creators, viz. the creator of good and the creator of evil, and we have examined this .matter in our discourses on the Divine Unity

Another topic in which it is discussed is the question of the Divine justice which is approached from diverse perspectives. Sometimes it is through the angle of the cosmic justice and the best order of existence and at times through the outlook of the goal-orientedness of the universe and that the philosophy behind the world of nature .is that the human being benefits from it while natural evils also inflict him

Sometimes it is through the viewpoint that in the theistic worldview, some of the undesirable happenings are a result of man's actions while these consequences usually affect not only the wrongdoers but the others as well. These are various cases in which 'evil' is mentioned as something in conflict with the justice of God (cosmic as well as retributory justice), and the Muslim philosophers and theologians have examined

.and resolved it through their respective ways

In view of the broadness of the scope of this topic, we shall examine and analyze it in .two lessons

## The Skepticism on Evil and the Best Order

### point

We have mentioned in an earlier lesson the proof of the best order. The skepticism on evil in this regard holds that evil – natural, moral or human evil – is in conflict with the excellence of the order of nature and that the best order demands that the universe .must be free from evil

### [Reply [to the Skepticism

In reply to this skepticism on evil in relation to the best and most perfect order, the theosophers have embarked on the examination of the hypothetical kinds of the possible being (mawjūd al-mumkin) from the perspective of good and evil, and on the basis of the Divine providence (‘ināyah) and wisdom (ḥikmah), they have concluded that only two kinds of it can be materialized; one is pure good while the other is the dominant and much good, but the materialization of other assumptions such as equal .good and evil, dominant and much evil and pure evil is impossible

Meanwhile, since pure evil means pure non-existence and sheer nullity and that the assumption of existence in this case is to assume two contradictory things, the equality of its evil with its goodness or its evil as more dominant than its goodness is in conflict with the Divine providence which necessitates the best order. This is incompatible with a being whose goodness is more dominant than its evil, for the non-existence of

more dominant goodness due to some evil is in itself a manifestation of more dominant evil, and this is incompatible with the Divine providence and wisdom.(١)

### The Non–discernment of Evil in the Realm of Nature

Apart from the Necessary Being by essence (wājib al–wujūd bi 'dh–dhāt) what possess reality or existence are the two realms; one is the realm of non–material (mufāriq) and incorporeal (mujarrad) beings, and the other is the realm of nature and material beings. Manifestations of evil (shurūr) surface in the realm of nature and material beings only because the nature of evil is absence or non–existence ('adam) – the absence or non–existence of what is desirable and contingent for a thing – and it is either the absence of the primary perfection (the archetype) or that of the secondary perfection. In any case, non–existence is a characteristic of a material thing and it pertains to matter and possibility (dispositional possibility or imkān–e isti'dādī).

Therefore, such non–existence which is the origin and source of evil has no place except in the physical realm. In this regard, 'Allāmah al–Ṭabāṭabā'ī has said:

"Evil, corruption and their likes are all undesirable and unwanted things which can be found in the physical realm; likewise, the concept of "bad" or "undesirable" is a concept which arises in contrast to the "good" or "desirable". Had there been no wellbeing or good health which our physical beings desire, we would have never regarded illness as bad, and had there been no comfort and security and any of the carnal or sensual pleasures, losing any of them



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١– See Nihāyat al–Ḥikmah, stage (marḥalah) ١٢, chap. ١٨.

would have never been painful for us or be considered a misfortune, just as we never regard the evenness of the number "four" or the oddness of the number "three" as .good or bad, good luck or bad luck because there is no point of comparison

It thus becomes clear that "evil" is an analogical matter and a non-existential concept in contrast to an attainable existential matter. That is, regarding evil, there must be a subject with an existential quality such that its desirability must be assumed and the absence of this quality of desirability from it would be regarded as "evil". For instance, the human being's possession of eyes is good. (Naturally, he wants to have eyes and it is also possible for him not to have them.) On the contrary, blindness is treated as ."evil" for him

And as a conclusion of this examination, we arrive at the point that "evil" – wherever it is – first and foremost, is a non-existential ('adamī), and secondly, a potential (imkānī) (matter.(۱)

To elaborate, physical existents are constituted by [certain] abilities and potentials, and they gradually acquire the existential perfections which may be possible for them. This gradual development depends on the mutual interaction among the physical existents, for each of the natural species has peculiar defects and perfections which are acquired through many other natural phenomena, and it is here that a sort of .clash or conflict arises, and as a result, relative or subjective evil comes into being

In other words, the

p: ۲۲۹

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۱ - Uṣūl-e Falsafeh, vol. ۵, p. ۱۷۲; See also Nihāyat al-Ḥikmah, stage (marḥalah) ۱۲, .chap. ۱۸

ability of matter to assume various forms, on one hand, and the contradiction of one form with another, on the other hand, are an element of destruction as well as construction, an agency for both extinction and origination, [an instrument of] wiping out the past as well as building the future, [a means of] taking out old forms and images and bringing out new portraits. As long as the members and elements do not clash with each other and do not influence each other, no average disposition or new combination will emerge. Thus, it is correct for us to say that "Contradiction is the source of good and the balancer of the universe, and the order in the universe is (based on it."(١)

In a discussion on the manner of involvement of evil in the Divine decree, Ṣadr al-:Muta'allihīn has thus said

The materialization of non-finite beings or existents which necessitates the Divine" providence necessitates the existence of transubstantiation (istiḥālāh) and contradiction (taḍād) in the world of generation and corruption ('ālam-e kawn wa fasād or the realm of nature), for without contradiction, generation and corruption will not be materialized, and without generation and corruption, in turn, non-finite animal and human existents and beings would not have existed. Meanwhile, the contradiction of qualities and forms is one of the properties of physical beings and is expedient for their interaction and not the independent action of the agent (naturally :and accidentally made and not originally made). It is thus correct to say, thus

Had there"



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.Adl-e Ilāhī (Divine Justice), ٨th ed., p. ٢١۴' -١

been no contradiction, the emanation of existence would not have continued from the Origin of existence; the Divine existence and bestowal would have been suspended; the realm of nature would have been in a standstill from possessing life through which it attains its goal; and most of the existents which could possibly emerge in the ulterior of possibility and non-existence would have remained."(1)

In Imām 'Alī's ('a) sermon on the Divine Unity (khutbat al-tawḥīd), he has also mentioned the principle of contradiction governing the realm of nature:

ضَادَّ النُّورَ بِالظُّلْمَهِ، وَالْوُضُوحَ بِالْبُهْمَهِ، وَالْجُمُودَ بِالْبَلَلِ، وَالْحَرُورَ بِالصَّرَدِ. مُؤَلِّفٌ بَيْنَ مُتَعَادِيَاتِهَا، مُقَارِنٌ بَيْنَ مُتَبَايِنَاتِهَا، مُقَرِّبٌ بَيْنَ مُتَبَاعِداتِهَا، مُفَرِّقٌ بَيْنَ مُتَدَانِيَاتِهَا.

"He has made light the contrary of darkness, brightness that of gloom, dryness that of moisture and heat that of cold. He produces affection among inimical things. He fuses together diverse things, brings near remote things and separates things which are joined together."(2)

In his Mathnawī-ye Ma'nawī, Mawlānā Rūmī has mentioned the issue of subsistence of natural life on the basis of contradiction, saying:

این جهان جنگ است چون کل بنگری ذره ذره همچو دین با کافری

آن یکی ذره همی پرد به چپ و آن دگر سوی یمین اندر طلب

این جهان زین جنگ قائم می بود در عناصر در نگر تا حل شود

بس بنای خلق بر اضداد بود لاجرم جنگی شد اندر ضر و سود

When you consider, this world is all at strife,

Mote with mote, as religion with infidelity.

One mote is flying to the left,

And another to the right in search.(3)

This world is maintained by means of

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۱- Asfār al-Arba'ah, vol. ۷, p. ۷۷.

۲- Nahj al-Balāghah, Sermon ۱۸۶.

۳- Nicholson (trans.), Mathnawī-ye Ma'nawī, Book ۶, lines ۳۶-۳۷.

:this war

(Consider the elements, in order that it may be solved.(۱

;Hence the edifice of creation is upon contraries

(Consequently we are at war for well-being and woe.(۲

:And Rūmī has also said

زندگانی آشتی ضدهاست مرگ آن کاندر میانشان جنگ خاست

صلح اضداد است عمر این جهان جنگ اضداد است عمر جاودان

;Life is the peace of contraries

(Death is the fact that war arose between them.(۳

Thus far, the conclusion of the discussion is that relative evil is indispensable to the physical beings and caused by the contradiction governing the realm of nature, and this contradiction is also a necessary or essential requisite of development and (required by the Divine justice, wisdom and providence: (۴

إذ مُقتضی الْحِكْمَهِ وَالْعِنَایَهِ ایصال كُلَّ ممكن لِغَایَهِ

### The Beauty of the Totality or the Perfect System

Another point which must be given attention in reply to the misgiving on evil from the perspective of excellence of the natural order is the principle of the realm of nature's organicness which has been given attention by the theosophers since the ancient history of philosophy. According to this [principle], the universe is an indivisible unit .whose components have ontological and real relationship with one another

As a result, correct judgment on its excellence depends on the examination of all beings and the whole system, and in the whole system and overall equilibrium, the existence of inferior and superior, ups and downs, darkness and light, suffering and pleasure is essential, and it must be said that

خهان چون خط و خال و چشم و ابروست که هر چیزی بجای خویش نیکوست

اگر نیک و بدی بینی مزن

p: ۲۳۲

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۱- Ibid., line ۴۷.

۲- Ibid., line ۵۰.

۳- Ibid., Book ۱, line ۱۲۹۳.

۴- Ḥakīm Sabziwārī, Sharḥ-e Manẓūmah, "Al-'Illāta wa 'l-Ma'lūl," "Ghurar fī 'l-Mabḥath 'An al-Ghāyah."

دم که هم ابلیس می‌باید هم آدم

And it is also right to say that

ابروی کج ار راست بدی کج بودی

.If your eyebrows were straight, you were defective

And

از شیر حمله خوش بود و از غزال رم

(What was pleasant in the lion was its attack and in the gazelle its being scared.(۱

**Objection**

**point**

In the physical beings, it is not correct to say that goodness dominates over evil, for on top of them are the human beings, and on account of committing undesirable acts and being afflicted with moral vices and crooked beliefs, most of them are .manifestations of severe wickedness

Since the worldly life is temporary and the Hereafter is an eternal abode and that the said individuals deserve to incur the Divine wrath and be deprived of the everlasting felicity, the otherworldly outcome of their lives is chastisement and evil. Though they may have lives of animalistic pleasure in this world, they will become insignificant .compared to the punishment in the Hereafter

**Reply**

:In terms of theoretical and practical perfections, the human beings are of three types

(۱) those who have attained the highest level of perfection in both aspects,

(۲) those who are in the lowest level and lack any kind of theoretical or practical perfection, and

those who are situated between these two extremes and diverse levels in both (٣) .aspects

It is obvious that most people belong to the third group. Relative to the total number of people, the second group is lesser in number and the eternal damnation in the



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١- Murtaḍā Muṭahharī, ‘Adl-e Ilāhī (Divine Justice), ٨th ed., pp. ١٧٩-١٨٣.

final abode belongs to the second group, and the rest, even if they incur punishment, (will finally be admitted to the vast door of the Divine mercy.(١

## Second Objection

### point

Why did God not create the world of nature in such a way that there is not even a ?speck of atom in it and it is purely good

### Reply

The said assumption is rationally impossible because its implication is that the material being is both material and immaterial at the same time for in terms of materialization of existential perfections possible for it, there are only two possibilities for it. One [possibility] is that the said perfections are acquired by it actually (bi 'l-fi'l). This refers to the absolutely immaterial being (such as non-material intellect ('aql-e mafāriq)). The other [possibility] is that its perfections are not acquired actually. This type is either material being or non-absolute non-material being (such as the spirit .(((nafs

The state of these two types of contingent being, therefore, is an open circuit of creation and non-creation. But to assume that the second type would exist while being gradually evolving (tadrīj al-wujūd) and actually deserving its perfections – like the assumption that the first type is gradually evolving and actually not deserving its .perfections – necessitates contradictions, and it is impossible

Moreover, since non-creation of the second type which is the manifestation of the dominant good necessitates dominant evil and giving preference to dominant evil over dominant good is unthinkable for the Wise Agent, creation of the realm of nature which necessitates



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.Sharḥ al-Ishārāt, vol. ٣, pp. ٣٢٥-٣٢٨; Asfār al-Arba'ah, vol. ٧, pp. ٧٩-٨٠ -١

(less evil is in itself concomitant to the Divine justice and wisdom.(1)

**Evil and the All–encompassing Power of God**

A Western philosopher(2) regards the existence of evil in the realm of nature as incompatible with the all-encompassing power of God and His absolute goodness and graciousness, saying that the question of evil in its simplest form is as follows: (1) God is the Omnipotent; (2) God is absolutely gracious; and (3) yet, evil exists. These three cases are in conflict with the main components of most theological views. For instance, if two of these cases are true, the third will be definitely false. Then, in :explaining the contradiction among them, he has thus stated

a. Good is the opposite of evil such that a well-wisher tries to remove evil as much as he can, and

.b. The powers of the Omnipotent Being know no bounds and limits

These two premises necessitate that if one is absolutely gracious as well as omnipotent, he will totally get rid of evil. As such, the two cases – "There is the .omnipotent" and "Evil exists" – are contradictory

This misgiving is caused by the failure to consider a rational and intrinsic principle, and that is the discussion about the ability or inability of the agent and his being good or evil depends on whether the subject is essentially and practically possible or essentially and practically impossible; otherwise, the problem is with the other party .and not with the agent

If we would not take this rational principle into consideration, the misgiving cannot be confined on



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.Sharḥ-e Ishārāt, vol. ۳, p. ۳۲۸ -۱

It refers to John Leslie Mackie (۱۹۱۷-۸۱) in the article "Evil and Absolute Power" in -۲ .Kalām-e Falsafī, pp. ۱۴۵-۱۷۰

the question of evil as it will also be applied to all cases of impossibility such as bringing two contradictories together, law of non-contradiction, negation of a thing by itself, the circle's possession of four sides, etc. These will be raised in comparison to .the principle of God's absolute power or omnipotence

Meanwhile the solution to the misgiving on contradictions in all these cases is to pay attention to the said rational and intrinsic principle. Definitely, Mr. Mackie does not consider the impossibility of a drawing to be square and circle at the same time as the reason for his ability to do so, and he will argue that he can draw both shapes. However, the materialization of the said two shapes by means of a single agent at the .same time is essentially impossible, and impossibility is beyond the sphere of ability

Such is the discussion on the question of evil in the realm of nature. A material being that is associated with contingence (imkān), capacity (isti'dād) and gradation (tadrīj) cannot be devoid of evil. As explained earlier, the state of such a being is an open circuit of existence and non-existence, and to assume an existence without evil is tantamount to assuming two contradictory matters. 'Allāmah al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī has :expressed this subject in this way

When analyzed, this notion is like asking, 'Why did the God of matter and nature not" set matter and nature as immaterial?' Any existent that has no possibility of having or not having perfection cannot be a

material being. If this universe does not have the quality that each of its components can transform into something else and under certain conditions it can find its existential interests and without which it would be miserable and static, it follows that (this universe is not material.”(١

It is appropriate here to cite Imām ‘Alī’s (‘a) statement in reply to this question: “Can God who, according to the monotheists, is capable of doing everything, place the ”?world without making it small inside a chicken egg without making it bigger

(In reply to the said question, the Imām (‘a) said: (٢

إنّ اللهَ تَبارَکَ وَتعالی لایُنْسَبُ إلی العَجْزِ، وَالَّذی سَأَلْتَنی لایَکونُ.

It must be noted that the phrase “as much as he can” in Mackie’s first premise is not correct. What is correct is “as much as possible” which means that the Agent who is absolutely gracious will remove evil as much as possible which is not tantamount to .impossibility. It is clear that no objection can be raised against this proposition

**Review Questions**

.Prove that evil has no contradiction with the excellence of the order of nature .١

.Write down the reason why good is inseparable with evil in the realm of nature .٢

Write down Ṣadr al-Muta’allihīn’s statement concerning the nature of evil’s place in .٣ .the Divine decree

Write down the statement of the Commander of the Faithful (Imām ‘Alī) (‘a) . ۴ .regarding the principle of contradiction governing the realm of nature

Write down along with its refutation the objection on the inability of good to .۵



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.Uṣūl-e Falsafeh wa Rawish-e Realism, vol. ۵, p. ١٧٣ -١

.Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, Al-Tawḥīd, section (bāb) ٩, ḥadīth ٩, p. ١٣٠ -٢

.dominate evil in the world of creation

Why did God not create the realm of nature in such a way that there is not the least .۶ ?evil and there would be absolute goodness

Write down along with its refutation the notion of incompatibility of the existence of .۷ .evil in the realm of nature with the all-encompassing power of God

## Lesson ۲۵: Evil and the Justice of God

### point

In religious texts, it is asserted that God has created the realm of nature for the :benefits of humanity, as God says in the Holy Qur'an, thus

( هُوَ الَّذِی خَلَقَ لَکُمْ مَا فِی الأرْضِ جَمِیعًا )

"(۱)It is He who created for you all that is in the earth."(

In this regard, this objection is put forth: natural evils, i.e. undesirable events such as earthquake, flood, typhoon, volcanic eruption, and the like; predator and biting animals; plagues; and viruses go against man's interests and bring harm to him. If man's exploitation of nature were concomitant with the justice and wisdom of God, why did He create nature as associated with evils? If nature's association with evils is inevitable, it follows that serving the interests of man should be considered the .philosophy behind the creation of nature

### General Welfare and Public Good

This objection is caused by a partial outlook on events, observation of limited individual losses, and overlooking of the general welfare and public good although rationally public interests and benefits prevail over personal and particular interests. On this basis, gains and losses in the realm of nature must be considered as a whole and the general objectives

.Sūrat al-Baqarah ٢:٢٩ -١

.and interests must be gauged. With this outlook, the problem will be solved

Regarding death which can be regarded as the most painful occurrence and the most :prominent manifestation of evil, Ṣadr al-Muta'allihīn said

If we reflect well on this undesirable phenomenon, it will become clear that it is" beneficial to the person who dies as well as to the others. Its benefit for the one who dies is that he will become free from the life in this world which is replete with miseries and afflictions, and its benefit for the others is that had there been no death; uncontrollable population explosion would have made life's arena narrow and human .living impossible

In a tradition (ḥadīth) reported from Imām al-Ṣādiq ('a), it is said that some of the" previous communities asked their prophet to petition to God the removal of death from them.(١) The said prophet petitioned so and God granted it and took death away from them. As a result, their generations multiplied and the usual flow of their lives was suspended because each person had to attend only to the needs of their ageing parents and grandparents and had no opportunity to perform any constructive work. For this reason, they asked their prophet to petition God for the return of the attribute (of death to them."(٢

**Unpleasant Things and Understanding the Sweetness of Doing Good**

One of the utilities of the undesirable [things and happenings] is that it makes a person perceive and enjoy the good and pleasant things. Had it not been for illness, man would have never found



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Most probably, it means some alteration in the law of nature and the usual mode of -١ death, and not abrogation of the law of death which is definitive, universal and .unexceptional

.Al-Kāfī, vol. ٣, p. ٢۶٠; Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, Al-Tawḥīd, p. ۴٠١ -٢

out the blessing of good health and felt its pleasure. Had there been no hunger, being full would not have been understandable and satisfying. Without darkness, light could not have been appreciated. Of course, this does not mean that without considering individual capacities and potentials, God would originate painful happenings and .creatures that bring about evil so as to teach the value of good and goodness

This rather means that one of the benefits of what is called 'evil' is to identify and perceive the pleasantness of good. In view of the fact that God creates the creatures while considering their inherent potentials, and the reply to the objection on why the [Arabic] letter alīf is a straight line while the letter dāl is a curve is that these traits are part of the corollaries of their nature. Each of them is demanded by this type of existential designation and realization and nothing else; all these differences are (based upon the principle of cosmic justice of God – "giving every right to its owner": (١

أَعْطىٰ كُلَّ ذى حَقٍّ حَقَّهُ.

### Undesirables and the Blossoming of Talents

A study of human history and great personalities clearly shows that undesirable events have a crucial role in the blossoming and coming to fruition of talents, and the secret behind this is that as necessitated by his instinctive desire to prevail over the undesirable things. In order to emerge victorious in this confrontation, one would have to strive hard to make use of all his natural talents and capabilities, and this state



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See Ḥakīm Sabziwārī, Sharḥ al-Asmā' al-Ḥusnā, p. ۵۴; Murtaḍā Muṭahharī, 'Adl-e - ١ .Ilāhī, pp. ١٨٨-١٩١

of affairs leads to his personal growth and maturity.

Resistance against undesirable things strengthens and fortifies man's will-power and resolve, and causes the gem of his personality and manliness to appear.[1] One must endure all difficulties and afflictions in order to discover what is due to him. The Holy Qur'an says:

( لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الإنْسَانَ فِی کَبَدٍ )

"Certainly We created man in travail."[2]

It also says, thus:

( فَإِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا □ إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا )

"Indeed ease accompanies hardship. Indeed ease accompanies hardship."[3]

What is interesting is that these two verses come after certain verses which God has revealed as a consolation for the Holy Prophet (ṣ) in facing undesirable events. It thus states:

( أَلَمْ نَشْرَحْ لَکَ صَدْرَکَ □ وَوَضَعْنَا عَنْکَ وِزْرَکَ □ الَّذِی أَنْقَضَ ظَهْرَکَ □ وَرَفَعْنَا لَکَ ذِکْرَکَ □ فَإِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا □ إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا )

"Did We not open your breast for you and relieve you of your burden which [almost] broke your back? Did We not exalt your name? Indeed ease accompanies hardship. Indeed ease accompanies hardship."[4]

The verse "Indeed ease accompanies hardship" shows that the said blessings bestowed by God upon the Prophet (ṣ) is the outcome of his efforts and persistence in the way of playing his crucial sacred role as well as his patience and fortitude in facing adverse conditions. It is this 'usr (difficulty) which brings about the yusr (ease). Given this, one must not remain passive for even a moment; rather, after getting relief from every endeavour or pursuit, one must embark on

۱- Nahj al-Balāghah, Saying ۲۱۷.

۲- Sūrat al-Balad ۹۰:۴.

۳- Sūrat al-Sharḥ ۹۴:۵-۶.

۴- Sūrat al-Sharḥ ۹۴:۱-۶.

another struggle and turn his attention to his Lord by constantly striving hard. As it is ,thus stated

( فَإِذَا فَرَغْتَ فَانْصَبْ  وَإِلَى رَبِّكَ فَارْغَبْ )

(So when you are done, appoint, and turn eagerly to your Lord.”(۱“

:In this regard, Mawlawī [Rūmī] has thus said

رنج گنج آمد که رحمتها در اوست مغز تازه شد چو بخراشید پوست

ای برادر موضع تاریک و سرد صبر کردن بر غم و سستی و درد

چشمه حیوان و جام مستی است کان بلندیها همه در پستی است

آن بهاران مضمر است اندر خزان در بهار است آن خزان مگریز از آن

همره غم باش و با وحشت بساز می‌طلب در مرگ خود عمر دراز

:Pain is a treasure, for there are mercies in it

.the kernel becomes fresh when you scrape off the rind

,O brother, a dark and cold place

,to endure patiently sorrow and weakness and pain

,Is the Fountain of Life and the cup of intoxication

.for those heights are all in lowliness

:That spring is implied in autumn, and that autumn is in the spring

do not flee from it

,Be a fellow-traveller with grief, agree with desolation

(and seek long life in your death.(۲

Finding the way to paradise without enduring hardships and afflictions while undertaking the humane-sacred mission is impossible. The Holy Qur'an has :emphatically and categorically mentioned this subject in this manner

( أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِكُمْ مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ مَسَّتْهُمُ الْبَأْسَاءُ وَالضَّرَّاءُ وَزُلْزِلُوا حَتَّى يَقُولَ الرَّسُولُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ مَتَى نَصْرُ اللَّهِ أَلَا إِنَّ نَصْرَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ )

Do you suppose that you shall enter paradise though there“



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۱- Sūrat al-Sharḥ ۹۴:۷-۸.

۲- Mathnawī-ye Ma'nawī, Book ۲, lines ۲۲۶۱-۲۲۶۵.

has not yet come to you the like of [what befell]] those who went before you? Stress and distress befell them and they were convulsed until the apostle and the faithful who were with him said, 'When will Allah's help [come]?' Look! Allah's help is indeed (near!"(١)

### Painful Incidents or Warning Signs

From the perspective of man's spiritual life, undesirable natural events have also significant and considerable benefits on top of which is to reprove and wake him up. Entertainment and attachment to the outward manifestations of the corporeal world cause negligence of the spiritual values, and as this attachment increases, his distance from spirituality and real happiness also increases. In waking up man from the slumber of negligence and drawing his attention to lofty values, God, the All-merciful, has used many ways, among the most important of which are painful and :undesirable happenings. In this regard, the Holy Qur'an has thus stated

( وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِي قَرْيَةٍ مِّن نَّبِيٍّ إِلاَّ أَخَذْنَا أَهْلَهَا بِالْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَضَّرَّعُونَ )

We did not send a prophet to any town without visiting its people with stress and" (distress so that they might entreat [for Allah's forgiveness]."(٢)

( وَلَقَدْ أَخَذْنَا آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ بِالسِّنِينَ وَنَقْصٍ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَذَّكَّرُونَ )

Certainly We afflicted Pharaoh's clan with droughts and loss of produce, so that they" (may take admonition."(٣)

### Istidrāj and Ibtilā

Istidrāj and ibtilā are two Qur'anic concepts which refer to material blessings and undesirable natural events. Whenever a person sinks in the abyss of sins and disobedience to God while not facing painful happenings and always living in comfort



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١- Sūrat al-Baqarah ٢:٢١۴.

۲- Sūrat al-A‘rāf ۷:۹۴.

۳- Sūrat al-A‘rāf ۷:۱۳۰.

.and material blessings, he is afflicted with the punishment of istidrāj

However, whenever he would experience difficulties and adversities after committing sin and this would prompt him to repent for his sins and return to the service of God, he is a recipient of God's mercy and through which the jewel of his faith will be purged .of the dirts of sins

In his compiled book Al-Kāfī, the traditionist (muḥaddith) al-Kulaynī has recorded :Imām al-Ṣādiq ('a) as saying

Whenever God desires for the wellbeing of His servant who commits a sin, He would" put him in difficulty, and whenever He desires evil for His servant who commits a sin [as he himself chooses], He would give a bounty to him so he will forget to seek forgiveness and will be amused by the said bounty. This is what God refers to when :He says

( وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا سَنَسْتَدْرِجُهُمْ مِنْ حَيْثُ لا يَعْلَمُونَ )

As for those who deny Our signs, We will draw them imperceptibly [into ruin], whence" (they do not know."(۱), (۲

:(It is thus stated in the pithy aphorisms of Imām 'Alī ('a

كَمْ مِنْ مُسْتَدْرَجٍ بِالإِحْسَانِ إِلَيْهِ، وَمَغْرورٍ بِالسَّتْرِ عَلَيْهِ، وَمَفْتُونٍ بِحُسْنِ الْقَوْلِ فِيهِ! وَمَا ابْتَلَى اللهُ أَحَداً بِمِثْلِ الإِمْلاَءِ لَهُ.

There are many persons for whom constant grants of His Bounties turn them wicked" and stand fit for His punishment and there are many more who have become vain and self-deceptive because the Merciful Allah has not exposed their weaknesses and vices to the world and other people speak highly about them. All



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.Sūrat al-A'rāf ۷:۱۸۲ -۱

.Uṣūl al-Kāfī, vol. ۲, "Kitāb al-Īmān wa 'l-Kufr," "Bāb al-Istidrāj," ḥadīth ۱ -۲

this is an opportunity. No trial of the Lord is more severe than the time He allows (in which either you may repent or get deeper into vices)."(1)

For those who take admonition and do reflect, therefore, difficulties and undesirable things are manifestations of goodness and reflection of God's grace and mercy. For these individuals, painful happenings are like bitter pills that the doctor or guardians of the patient – out of sympathy and compassion – would ask him to take these pills to save his life. Now, if these individuals do not refrain from harmful foods and because of their failure to observe the doctor's instructions on taking medicine, the bitter medicine fails to bring about the sweetness of good health, the doctor can in no way be blameworthy and be at fault. The undesirable thing is an outcome of the misuse of the patient's will power, and nothing else.

### The Role of Sins in the Occurrence of Painful Incidents

From the perspective of Qur'anic worldview, good and bad deeds of the human beings have an influence on some of the natural pleasant and painful happenings. In connection with the role of good deeds in the multiplication of bounties, the Qur'an thus says:

( وَلَوْ أَنَّ أَهْلَ الْقُرَى آمَنُواْ وَاتَّقَواْ لَفَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِم بَرَكَاتٍ مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالأَرْضِ )

"If the people of the towns had been faithful and God-wary, We would have opened to them blessings from the heaven and the earth."(2)

And it also says:

( لَئِنْ شَكَرْتُمْ لأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ )

"If you are grateful, I will surely enhance you [in blessing]."(3)

( اِسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ غَفَّارًا



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۱- Nahj al-Balāghah, Saying ۱۱۶/۲۶۰.

٢- ٧:٩٦ Sūrat al-A‘rāf.

٣- ١٤:٧ Sūrat Ibrāhīm.

﴿ يُرْسِلِ السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْكَم مِّدْرَارًا ﴿ وَيُمْدِدْكُم بِأَمْوَالٍ وَبَنِينَ وَيَجْعَلْ لَكَمْ جَنَّاتٍ وَيَجْعَلْ لَكَمْ أَنْهَارًا )

Plead to your Lord for forgiveness. Indeed He is all-forgiver. He will send for you" abundant rains from the sky, and aid you with wealth and sons, and provide you with (gardens and provide you with streams. "(١)

:Regarding the evil deeds' contribution to undesirable events, it thus says

( ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِى الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِى النَّاسِ لِيُذِيقَهُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِى عَمِلُوا لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ )

Corruption has appeared in land and sea because of the doings of the people's" hands, that He may make them taste something of what they have done, so that they (may come back."(٢)

( وَمَا أَصَابَكُمْ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ فَبِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَيَعْفُوا عَنْ كَثِيرٍ )

Whatever affliction that may visit you is because of what your hands have earned," (and He excuses many [an offense]."(٣)

( وَلَوْ يُؤَاخِذُ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ بِظُلْمِهِمْ مَا تَرَكَ عَلَيْهَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ )

Were Allah to take mankind to task for their wrongdoing, He would not leave any" (living being upon it."(۴)

( ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَمْ يَكُ مُغَيِّرًا نِعْمَةً أَنْعَمَهَا عَلَى قَوْمٍ حَتَّى يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ )

That is because Allah never changes a blessing that He has bestowed on a people" (unless they change what is in their own souls, and Allah is all-hearing, all-knowing."(۵)

On this basis, in interpreting evils, one must not overlook the role of man in his undesirable actions. In fact, fairness in giving judgment and conducting research dictates that instead of putting into



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١- Sūrat Nūḥ ٧١:١٠-١١.

۲- ۳۰:۴۱ Sūrat al-Rūm.

۳- ۴۲:۳۰ Sūrat ash-Shūrā.

۴- ۱۶:۶۱ Sūrat an-Naḥl.

۵- ۸:۵۳ Sūrat al-Anfāl.

question the justice of God, one must first examine the ideological and practical equilibrium (faith and good deeds) of the human beings. Yet, what can be done when the egoistic man has no concern for exonerating himself even from entertaining !?doubt and skepticism on the justice of wisdom of the One who created him

### The Saints of God's Account as Separate

The principle is exclusive to those who do not have total protection from sins as they are prone to commit sins and wrongdoings, and the selected saints (awliyā') of God and genuine believers are excluded from this principle. The undesirable things that happen in their lives have a different interpretation, and that is promotion of status, elevation of perfection and getting closer to the Station of Divine Proximity. For :instance, Imām al-Ṣādiq ('a) was reported to have said

In the sight of God, man has a station which he cannot reach through [his] own good" deeds. God will afflict him with misfortune in body, wealth or offspring. Whenever he (demonstrates patience, he attains such station."(۱

:The Imām ('a) also said to Isḥāq ibn 'Ammār

يا إسْحاقُ لا تُعِدَّنَّ مُصيبَةً أُعْطِيتَ عَلَيْها الصَّبْرَ و اسْتَوْجَبْتَ عَلَيْها مِنَ اللهِ ثَوابًا بِمُصيبَةٍ، إنَّ المصيبَةَ الَّتى يُحْرَمُ صاحِبُها أجْرَها وَثَوابَها إذا لَمْ يَصْبِرْ عِنْدَ نُزولِها.

O Isḥāq! Do not regard as misfortune the undesirable happening which you endure" and for which you earn [spiritual] reward from Allah. Misfortune is the undesirable ".happening which one cannot endure and from whose reward one cannot earn

From here, one can realize the incorrectness of the notion of those who



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.Biḥār al-Anwār, vol. ۷۱, p. ۹۴ -۱

think that the undesirable events in the lives of the saints of God are covered by this :verse

( وَمَا أَصَابَكُمْ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ فَبِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَيَعْفُوا عَنْ كَثِيرٍ )

Whatever affliction that may visit you is because of what your hands have earned,“ (and He excuses many [an offense].”(١

For instance, after the attainment of martyrdom of Imām al-Ḥusayn (‘a) and his companions, the criminal Yazīd cited the said verse in a bid to manipulate public opinion with respect to his responsibility in what had transpired in Karbalā. Yet, Imām :al-Sajjād immediately confronted him and gave his decisive reply

:This verse of the Qur’an does not apply to us; what apply to us are these verses“

( مَا أَصَابَ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ فِي الأَرْضِ وَلا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ إِلا فِي كِتَابٍ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ نَبْرَأَهَا إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ  لِكَيْلا تَأْسَوْا عَلَى مَا فَاتَكُمْ وَلا تَفْرَحُوا بِمَا آتَاكُمْ )

No affliction visits the earth or yourselves but it is in a Book before We bring it about“ – that is indeed easy for Allah - so that you may not grieve for what escapes you, nor (exult for what comes your way.”(٢

What can be inferred from an examination of these two verses which were cited by Imām al-Sajjād (‘a) in reply to Yazīd is that without committing any sin or disobedience, some individuals will have painful experiences so as to attain [the state .of] submission and contentment on account of their patience and endurance

As a result, they would not accept anything except that which



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.Sūrat ash-Shūrā ۴٢:٣٠ -١

.Sūrat al-Ḥadīd ۵٧:٢٢ -٢

the souls accept; neither do they get sad for losing worldly things nor do they rush to acquire them. Imām al-Ḥusayn ('a) and his companions were an illustrious example of .such personalities

### Evil and Retributory Justice

Out of this point, one can reply to the misgiving about evil in the context of retributory justice. The misgiving is that the painful experiences that serve as a retribution or punishment for the sinners bring about disturbance, loss and harm to the innocent .and righteous and as a result, they are unjustly victimized

The reply is that the misfortunes and painful experiences serve as means of perfection and elevation for them, and although they have to suffer and lose materially, they will earn great rewards in terms of the life in the Hereafter. In order to attain these, every reasonable person should wholeheartedly endure material afflictions, and in principle, with this outlook, painful happenings turn sweet and ,[desirable, and in the words of Mawlawī [Rūmī

هر بلا کز دوست آید رحمت است آن بلا را بر دلم صد منت است

ای بلاهای تو آرام دلم حاصل از درد تو شد کام دلم

نالم و ترسم که او باور کند وز ترحم جور را کمتر کند

Abd Allāh ibn Mas'ūd is reported to have said: "One day we were in the company of' the Prophet (ṣ) who was then smiling and we asked him the reason for his smile. He (ṣ) said, 'I was surprised at the believer's impatience for illness. If he only knows the extent of rewards given to him for experiencing pain

(and illness, he would desire to be constantly sick.'"(1)

## Pains and Rewards

In their theological texts, the justice-oriented ('adliyyah) theologians have some discussions about suffering and recompense. First, they have divided suffering into two groups, viz. preliminary (ibtidā'ī) and meritorious (istiḥqāqī). They have then dealt with the positive form of preliminary suffering and thereafter they have mentioned that the justice of God necessitates that recompense must be given to those who endure suffering. In this regard, Ibn Maytham al-Baḥrānī has said:

"The positive form of preliminary suffering consists of two things. One is that in exchange for it, God bestows ample rewards in such a way that if one could choose between accepting the suffering and rewards, and the absence of suffering and to be deprived of those rewards, he will choose the former. Another is that the said suffering or undesirable thing includes bounties due to him or others. The reason for the first case is that the preliminary suffering without recompense is injustice, and the reason for the second case is that suffering with recompense and without motive is futile, and injustice and futility are impossible to apply to God."(2)

The current theological discourse is the answer to all the misgivings being raised in relation to the retributory justice of God and from the perspective of non-meritorious sufferings and afflictions. And its outcome is that such sufferings and afflictions, on one hand, are manifestations and expressions of the Divine grace for humanity, and on the other hand, God bestows so much reward to



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۱- Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, Al-Tawḥīd, section (bāb) ۶۲, ḥadīth ۳.

۲- Qawwām al-Marām, p. ۱۱۹.

those who endure sufferings and afflictions that any forethoughtful and realistic .person would voluntarily endure those sufferings and afflictions

**Concluding Points**

:At the end of this lesson, we deem it necessary to mention the following points

The [existence of] influence of man's good and bad deeds in natural occurrences is .١ one of the precepts, revelation and teachings of the Qur'an, and rationally, the existence of such a relationship between man and nature is possible, and since the authority of revelation is affirmed by reason, it follows that reason dictates that it .must be accepted

It is true that this relationship can be interpreted as natural and on the basis of .٢ conventional cause-and-effect relationship, and it can be said that what is meant by the effect of the good deeds of the human beings – in the sending down of blessings, for instance – is that whenever faith (īmān) and God-wariness (taqwā) are prevalent in human society, the individual members are hopeful and optimistic, and eagerly help one another in exploring and unraveling the secrets of nature; unity and solidarity reign in society; and laws and regulations are totally observed. On this basis, the causes and factors for advancement will be provided, and thus, the bounties of life will increase and thereafter the blessings of the Heaven and the earth will descend upon .them

What can be understood, however, from the apparent meanings of the Qur'anic verses and traditions (aḥādith) is that in addition to the natural effects of faith, God-wariness and repentance (tawbah) in

the sending down of the Divine blessings, there is also a sort of metaphysical effect, particularly the sins of those who are responsible for some undesirable events, and .this effect is beyond a sort of natural effect

The abovementioned subject is one of the universal principles and laws of human .۳ life, and one must not pass judgment on it by merely studying the personal lives of individuals. In many instances, in a corrupt and wicked society there may be pious and impious individuals who enjoy or are deprived of material bounties. There are reasons .and causes for it which are not hidden to the people of insight

That some painful natural events are caused by the undue attitudes of some .۴ individuals can in no way be a justification for a person not to do something to stop them and to make use of his intellectual, theoretical and physical ability to prevent the occurrence of undesirable events such as earthquakes and floods. In fact, from the religious perspective, saving a life is obligatory and laxity in facing critical events is not permissible. This point is exactly true with regards to another religious principle, i.e. .admonition to patience and fortitude in facing adversities and undesirable things

Regarding painful states such as poverty, insecurity, illness, and war which are .۵ caused by the egoism of the oppressors and criminals, the following points must also be borne in mind. Firstly, committing sin and disobeying God have a role in the .occurrence of these conditions

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For instance, it is stated in a tradition (ḥadīth) that whenever the members of society abandon the duty of enjoining what is good and forbidding what is wrong (amr bi 'l-ma'rūf wa 'n-nahyi 'ani 'l-munkar), wickedness will prevail.

۶. Secondly, after the occurrence of these events, the members of society are duty-bound to stop and finally uproot the traces of these events. Thirdly, those who are responsible for these undesirable states shall be held responsible and condemned from the perspective of reason, conscience and religion, and they must be punished accordingly.

### Review Questions

۱. Write down one of the benefits of undesirable things.

۲. How can undesirable things cause the blossoming of talents?

۳. What is meant by istidrāj and ibtilā?

۴. Write down the role of sins in the occurrence of painful happenings.

۵. What is the explanation for undesirable things that happen to the saints (awliyā'), God's elect and the faithful?

۶. Write down the misgiving on the existence of evil in the context of retributory justice along with the refutation to it.

۷. What is meant by 'suffering' (ālām) and 'recompense' (a'wāḍ)?

## Lesson ۲۶: Man and Freewill

### point

One of the controversial issues in the justice and wisdom of God is the question of man's freewill (ikhtiyār) in actions which are within the domain of obligation (taklīf) and for which he is either praised or condemned. This is because obliging a person under compulsion, and praising or condemning him for an action he does under such condition is evil and incorrect, and as dictated by the principle of justice and

wisdom, God is immune from evil deeds.

In refuting the notion of those who regard the Divine decree and providence as tantamount to the absence of freewill in the human being, Imām ‘Alī (‘a) has said:

لَوْ كانَ كَذلِكَ لَبَطَلَ الثَّوابُ وَالْعِقابُ، وَالأَمْرُ وَالنَّهْيُ وَالزَّجْرُ وَلَسَقَطَ مَعْنَى الْوَعْدِ وَالْوَعيدِ، وَلَمْ يَكُنْ عَلى مُسيءٍ لائِمَةٌ وَلا لِمُحْسِنٍ مَحْمَدَةٌ.

“If it was such, reward and punishment, command and prohibition and chastisement were false, and promise and warning baseless, and the wrongdoer would not be condemned and the doer of good be praised.”[1]

Muḥammad ibn ‘Ajlān asked Imām al-Ṣādiq (‘a), “Had God compelled [His] servants in their actions?” The Imām (‘a) replied, thus:

اللهُ أَعْدَلُ مِنْ أنْ يُجْبِرَ عَبدًا عَلى فِعْلٍ ثُمَّ يُعَذِّبَهُ عَلَيهِ.

“Allah is more just than that He would compel a servant to do something and thereafter punish him.”[2]

Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī Washshā’ asked Imām al-Riḍā (‘a), “Does Allah compel [His] servants to commit sins?” The Imām (‘a) replied:

اللهُ أعْدَلُ وَأحْكَمُ مِنْ ذلِكَ.

“Allah is more just and wise than that (compelling His servants to commit sins).”[3]

In the said traditions (aḥādīth), predetermination’s inconsistency with the justice and wisdom of God as well as with [the implication of] duty, promise, warning, reward, and punishment has been pointed out and emphasized.

The justice-oriented theologians have also regarded the notion of predetermination (jabr) as contrary to the Divine justice, and by citing the justice and wisdom of God, they have argued for the freewill of man. For instance, Wāṣil ibn ‘Aṭā has said:

إنَّ الْبارى تَعالى عَدْلٌ حَكيمٌ... وَلا يَجوزُ أنْ يُريدَ مِنَ

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۱ - Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, Al-Tawḥīd, section (bāb) on the Divine decree and providence, ḥadīth ۲۸.

۲- Ibid., section on the negation of predestination and absolute freewill, ḥadīth ۶.

۳- Ibid., ḥadīth ۱۰.

العِبادِ خِلافُ ما يَأمُرُ، وَيَحْتِمُ عَلَيهِم شَيئاً ثمّ يُجازيهِمْ عَليهِ.

“Indeed God, the Exalted, is just and wise… It is not inconceivable [for Him] to desire for [His] servants that which is contrary to what He commands, and to compel them to do something and punish them afterward [for doing so].”(١)

After pointing out that the existence of freewill in man is something axiomatic in that it requires no more proof, Ibn Maytham al-Baḥrānī has mentioned forms of warning two of which are as follows:

١. Every reasonable person considers good to praise what is good and to condemn what is evil, and this point depends on the fact that the doer of good and the evildoer are the agents of their respective actions.

٢. Our conscience can discern that our actions depend on our motives and freewill has no meaning other than this.(٢)

Muḥaqqiq al-Ṭūsī has also considered self-evident the agency (fā‘iliyyah) and freewill of man, saying thus:

وَالضَّرورَهُ قاضِيَهٌ بِاسْتِنادِ أَفْعالِنا إلَيْنا.

“Axiomatic perception testifies that our actions are traceable to us.”(٣)

## The Theologians’ Opinions on the Interpretation of Freewill

### point

The abovementioned rational and textual proofs affirm the principle of freewill for man. On this basis, belief in predeterminism in actions is invalid. Now, let us see how the Muslim theologians have interpreted freewill. On the interpretation of freewill, three views have been advanced, viz. (١) tafwīḍ (total delegation), (٢) kasb (acquisition), and (٣) amr bayn al-amrayn (position between two positions).

Now, we shall examine these three views:

### ١. The Theory of Tafwīḍ

The outcome of the theory of tafwīḍ is that the voluntary action of man is brought into being

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۱- Shahristānī, Al-Milal wa 'n-Nihal, vol. ۱, p. ۴۷.

۲- Qawā'id al-Marām, p. ۱۰۸.

۳- Kashf al-Murād, station (maqṣad) ۳, chap. ۳.

by himself alone and it is not a creation (makhlūq) of God. The attribution of man's action to God is not a real attribution. It rather means that God had created man and has given him the ability to do an action, but He has no involvement in the performance or non-performance of any single human act. That is, his action is ontologically delegated to him. The proofs presented by Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār al-Mu'tazilī for this theory are as follows:

۱. Man's actions depend on his motive and intention. He does whatever he intends. He does not do whatever he does not intend. Therefore, man is the creator of his own work, and God has not created it in him.(۱)

۲. God cannot be considered the creator of man's actions because among them are acts of injustice and oppression, and God is immune from injustice and oppression.(۲)

۳. Verses of the Qur'an also show that God is not the creator of man's action because according to the following verse, that which God creates is good:

(الَّذِی أَحْسَنَ کُلَّ شَیْءٍ خَلَقَهُ )

"[It is He] who perfected everything that He created."(۳)

And it is free from blemish as well:

(الَّذِی أَتْقَنَ کُلَّ شَیْءٍ )

"[It is He] who has made everything faultless."(۴)

This is while some of the human actions are unacceptable and faulty. So, God can never be the agent and creator of these actions. The Holy Qur'an has thus stated:

(فَمَن شَاء فَلْيُؤْمِن وَمَن شَاءَ فَلْيَكْفُرْ )

"Let anyone who wishes believe it, and let anyone who

۱- Sharḥ al-Uṣūl al-Khamsah, p. ۲۲۶.

۲- Ibid., p. ۲۳۱.

۳- Sūrat al-Sajdah ۳۲:۷.

۴- Sūrat al-Naml ۲۷:۸۰.

(wishes disbelieve it."(١)

### Examination and Criticism

١. From the proofs presented above, beyond the fact that man's action is truly traceable to him and he is real agent of his action and that he does it out of his own freewill and volition cannot be inferred. But that his action is not a creation of God cannot be inferred from the same because good and evil are sometimes ontological and real, and at times, they are relative and abstractive. Ontologically, whatever exists in the universe has the attribute of goodness, and the verse "[It is He] who perfected everything that He created" refers to this fact.

٢. Relatively, good and evil are abstracted after the materialization of action and in confirmation with the rational and religious rules. It is this good and evil attributed to man that makes his choice the basis of conformity or non-coformity of the action to the rational and religious rules. But that man's intention or motive has a role in his action or that faith and unbelief are entrusted to his choice and will do not suggest his independence in doing his action and negating the action as being a creation of God.

٣. Tafwīḍ is a kind of dualism and it is in conflict with the principles of the Divine Unity (tawḥīd) in creation (khāliqiyyah) and management (tadbīr)).

After citing the theory of tafwīḍ and the motive behind it which is to defend the justice of God and to declare His immunity [from any false attribution], Ṣadr al-Muta'allihīn has criticized



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١- Sūrat al-Kahf ١٨:٢٩.

:it and thus said

They have overlooked the fact that their view necessitates affirmation of so many“ partners of God. There is no doubt that belief in the individuals as the creators of [their own] actions is worse than the belief in the idols and stars as intercessors before (God.”(١

It is for this reason that in some traditions (aḥādīth), Qadariyyah (those who negate the Divine power in voluntary actions or those who subscribe to tafwīḍ) are described as the Magians (majūs) of the Muslim community (ummah). In Thawāb al-A‘māl, for :instance, Shaykh al-Ṣadūq recorded Imām ‘Alī (‘a) to have said

لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ مَجوسٌ، وَمُجوسُ هذِهِ الأُمَّةِ الَّذينَ يَقولونَ لا قَدرَ.

There is a Magian for every community and the Magians of this community are those“ (who deny the Divine decree (qadr).”(٢

Another problem with this theory is that it goes against the universality of the absolute power and sovereignty of God. In the traditions (aḥādīth) narrated from the pure Imāms (‘a) about the refutation of the theory of tafwīḍ, this flaw has always been mentioned. For instance, it is thus stated in a tradition narrated by Imām al-:(Ṣādiq (‘a) from the Prophet (ṣ

مَنْ زَعَمَ أَنَّ الْخَيرَ وَالشَّرَّ بِغَيْرِ مَشيئَةِ اللهِ فَقَدْ أَخْرَجَ اللهَ عَنْ سُلطانِهِ.

Anyone who imagines that good and bad are outside the will of Allah has thrown Allah“ (out of His sovereignty.”(٣

In another ḥadīth, it is reported that Imām al-Bāqir (‘a) addressed Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, :thus

إِيّاكَ أَنْ تَقولَ بِالتَّفويضِ فَإِنَّ اللهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ لَمْ يُفَوِّضِ الأَمْرَ إِلى خَلْقِهِ وَهْنًا مِنْهُ وَضَعْفًا.

’Never say ‘delegation“

۱- Al-Asfār al-Arbaʿah, vol. ۶, p. ۳۷۰.

۲- Biḥār al-Anwār, vol. ۵, p. ۱۲۰, ḥadīth ۵۸.

۳- Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, Al-Tawḥīd, section (bāb) on the negation of predestination and absolute freewill, ḥadīth ۲.

tafwīḍ) for Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, has not delegated the affair of creation) (and control to His creatures out of weakness and impotence."(1)

:And Imām al-Ṣādiq ('a) is reported to have said

إِنَّ القَدَرِيَّةَ مَجوسُ هَذهِ الأُمَّهِ وَهُمُ الَّذينَ أَرادوا أَنْ يَصِفوا اللهَ بِعَدْلِهِ فَأَخْرَجوهُ مِنْ سُلْطانِهِ.

Qadariyyah are the Magians of this community. They are those who want to describe" (God with justice but the consequence is that they got rid of his sovereignty."(2)

**The Theory of Kasb .2**

**point**

The majority of Ash'arī theologians are of the opinion that the human actions are only realized through the power of God, and man's ability and freewill have no role at all in :their realization. The author of Al-Mawāqif has said

إِنَّ أَفْعالَ الْعِبادِ الإخْتِيارِيَّهَ واقِعَهٌ بِقَدَرِ اللهِ سُبحانَهُ وَتَعالى وَحْدَها.

Indeed the voluntary actions of the servants are solely realized by the power of" (Allah, the Glorious and Exalted."(3)

Their most important motive in advancing this theory is to defend the principle of the .(Divine Unity (tawḥīd) in Creatorship (khāliqiyyah

Now, this objection can be raised: if the voluntary actions of man are solely creations and caused by the power of God and that the ability and freewill of man has no role at all in their realization, it follows that he is an agent under compulsion, and as the Ash'arīs have considered the theory of jabr (compulsion) unacceptable, they regard .(the human being as free (mukhtār

In order to get out of this impasse and explain man's freewill and that his power and will have a sort of relationship with his voluntary

۱- Ṭabarsī, Al-Iḥtijāj, p. ۳۲۷.

۲- Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, Al-Tawḥīd, section on predestination and freewill.

۳- Sharḥ al-Mawāqif, vol. ۸, ۱۴۶.

,actions, they have put forth the theory of kasb (acquisition). As Taftazānī has said

That man is a free agent has no meaning other than that he creates his actions" through [his] own motive and will, and on the other hand, God is the free Agent of all things including man's actions. And it is clear that two independent powers cannot be associated with a single action. In order to get free from this impasse, there is no escape except for us to say that God is the creator of man's action, and man is the (one who acquires it."(١)

### The Interpretation of Kasb

In interpreting kasb, Ash'arī theologians have expressed different views, but the most popular of them is that the connection between God's creation of the human action and man's power and freewill – which are also God's creations – is called kasb .(acquisition), and the said connection is not that of cause-and-effect

That is, man's ability and freewill have no role in the realization of its action; it is rather that of the connection between the receptacle (ẓarf) and the utensil (maẓrūf), the dwelling (ḥāll) and the dwelling place (maḥall). As Mīr Sayyid Sharīf Gurgānī and ,Fāḍil Qawshchī have said

أَلْمُرادُ بِكَسْبِهِ إيّاهُ مُقارِنَتُهُ لِقُدْرَتِهِ وَإرادَتِهِ مِنْ غَيرِ أنْ يَكونَ هُناكَ مَعَهُ تَأثيرٌ أو مَدْخَلٌ فى وُجودِهِ كونه مَحلاً لَهُ.

That man 'acquires' his own action means that his ability and will have connection" with the occurrence of the action without his ability having any influence on the existence of the action except that man



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.Sharḥ 'Aqā'id al-Nisfiyyah, pp. ١١٥-١١٧ -١

is the locus of the action’s occurrence.”(١)

### A Criticism of the Theory of Kasb

The theory of kasb is criticized and refuted not only by those who oppose the Ash‘arīs (i.e. the justice-oriented theologians). In fact, some Ash‘arī scholars have also considered it not enough to solve the problem of predestination. For instance, Aḥmad Amīn al-Miṣrī has regarded it as a new terminology for the theory of predestination, saying thus:

وَهُوَ – كَما تَرَى – لا يُقَدّمُ فی الموضوعِ وَلا يُؤَخّرُ، فَهُوَ شِكْلٌ جَديدٌ فی التَّعْبيرِ عَنِ الجبَرِ.

“And as you can see, it does not offer or suspend anything from the subject as it is [just] a new form of the expression of ‘predestination’.”(٢)

In criticizing the theory of kasb, Shaykh al-Shaltūt has also said, thus:

“The interpretation of kasb as a common symmetry between man’s action and ability without his ability having any role in the realization of the action – in addition to being inconsistent with its literal and Qur’anic expression – is also beyond explanation of the question of duty and the principle of Divine justice and man’s responsibility.

This is because the said connection is the outcome of the creation of action by God within the receptacle of man’s ability, and not a creation or affordable to man so as to be emender of the action’s relation to man. Just as action has connection with man’s ability, it has also connection with his hearing, sight and knowledge. In this case, ability has such distinction that action’s connection with it makes attribution of action to man be

p: ۲۶۱

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١- Sharḥ al-Mawāqif, vol. ٨, p. ١۴۶; Sharḥ Tajrīd al-‘Aqā’id, p. ۴۴۵.

٢- Ḍuḥā ’l-Islām, vol. ٣, p. ۵٧.

(known!"(١)

## (The Theory of the "Position between Two Positions" (amr bayn al-amrayn

### point

It becomes clear from the above point that none of the two theories – tafwīḍ and kasb – in relation to the interpretation and justification of the principle of freewill can be accepted. The theory of tawfīḍ is inconsistent with the explanation on God's creatorship and universality of His absolute power and sovereignty, and the theory of kasb is no different from determinism except in expression or terminology, and as a result, it is incompatible with the principle of the Divine justice, duty and its functions.

Here, there is another theory which is well known as the "position between two positions" (amr bayn al-amrayn). This theory was put forth by the Imāms from among the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) and was accepted by the Imāmī theologians and Muslim philosophers.

### "A Historical Survey of the "Position between Two Positions

It can be inferred from the study of traditions (aḥādīth) that this theory was first advanced by Imām 'Alī ('a). As narrated, Imām 'Alī ('a) was talking about the wonders of the human soul and heart when someone stood up and asked him to talk about predestination (qadar). Because of the intricacy and profundity of the issue, the Imām ('a) considered it inappropriate to talk about it under such circumstances and asked the person to refrain from raising the question. However, he raised his question again while the Imām ('a) kept on refraining from dealing with the issue of qadar. When he repeated his question for the fourth time, the Imām ('a) said:

لَمّا أبَيْتَ فَإنَّهُ أمْرٌ بَيْنَ الأَمْرَينِ، لا جَبْرَ وَلاتَفْويضَ

"Since you insist,



١- Buḥūth fī 'l-Milal wa 'n-Nihal, vol. ٢, p. ١٥٣, as quoted in Shaykh Shaltūt's exegesis of

.the Holy Qur’an, pp. ۲۴۰–۲۴۲

then be it known that] the position is between two positions; there is neither] (predetermination (jabr) nor absolute freewill (tafwīḍ)."(١)

During the time of Imām al-Ḥasan, Imām al-Ḥusayn and Imām Zayn al-'Ābidīn – on account of the exceptional political conditions created by the Umayyad rulers throughout the Muslim world of that ear, the people's link with the People of Revelation was severed and they were not even referred to in matters relating to the religious laws and ideological issues. For this reason, the traditions (aḥādīth) concerning them are very few and the number of aḥādīth regarding the "position .between two positions" is also very insignificant

During the time of Imām al-Bāqir and Imām al-Ṣādiq ('a), however, the atmosphere of suppression and persecution was somehow mitigated and the people could then be able to refer to the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) on matters pertaining to religious questions and teachings. The Ahl al-Bayt ('a), in turn, were able to initiate and strengthen a profound and deep-rooted cultural movement. As such, ample traditions (aḥādīth) in various aspects of the religious teachings have been narrated by them. Among these aḥādīth are about the incorrectness of predeterminism and absolute freewill, and the correct position is the "position between two positions". We shall now cite examples of these .traditions

### A Manifestation of the Divine Grace

Someone asked Imām al-Ṣādiq ('a), thus: "Has God compelled [His] servants to commit sins?" The Imām ('a) said, "No." The person asked, "What is the truth then?" :The Imām ('a) said

لُطْفٌ مِنْ رَبِّک بَیْنَ ذلِک.

The grace emanating from your Lord"



.Biḥār al-Anwār, vol. ۵, p. ۵۷ -۱

(is between that."(1)

[:Regarding the word luṭf (grace), Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī thus writes]

In lexicon, the word luṭf or liṭāfah means ẓirāfah (elegance) which is used for" something abstract and subtle. Luṭf is one of the Attributes of Divine Beauty and one of the Best Names (asmā' al-ḥusnā) of God. Sometimes, it is [meant as] an Attribute of the Divine Essence and refers to His knowledge of the subtleties of things. At other times, it is [meant as] an Attribute of the Divine Action and refers to the special and (judicious management on the basis of the Divine mercy."(2)

Of the said two meanings, the second meaning is suitable to the Station, and as a result, what is meant by wisdom of the Divine grace which is between predetermination and absolute freewill is that each predetermination or each absolute freewill is in conflict with the justice, wisdom and mercy of God which are considered the foundations of God's active grace. Between these two, therefore, there is a third way which is based upon the Divine grace and reflects the wise, just and compassionate management of God. This way which is the manifestation of the Divine grace, and real at the same time, is elegant and subtle, and to grasp them is beyond the common intellectual levels. And for this reason, the Imām ('a) would .refrain from interpreting it to the one who asked

#### Known Only to the True Men of Learning

Someone asked Imām al-Ṣādiq ('a) about predestination and absolute freewill. The :Imām ('a) thus replied

لا جَبْرَ وَلا قَدَرَ وَلكِنْ مَنْزِلَةٌ بَيْنَهُما، فيهَا



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۱- Uṣūl al-Kāfī, vol. ۱, section (bāb) on predestination and absolute freewill, ḥadīth ۸.

۲- Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, Al-Mufradāt, under the word luṭf.

الحقُّ الَّتى لا يَعْلَمُها إلّا العالِمُ أَو مَنْ عَلَّمَها إيّاهُ العالِمُ.

There is neither predestination nor absolute freewill, but between them is a position" in which is the truth, and no one knows it except the learned person or one who is (taught by a learned person."(۱)

**An Illustrious Example**

It is recorded in another ḥadīth that Imām al-Ṣādiq ('a) was asked about the truth of :the "position between two positions" (amr bayn al-amrayn). The Imām ('a) said

Allegorically, the 'position between two positions' is like seeing someone who is" committing a sin. You dissuade him from doing so but he does not pay attention to you. So, you leave him alone. In this case, neither did you command him to commit a ".sin nor did you persuade him to do so

In his commentary to this tradition, Ṣadr al-Muta'allihīn has some interesting remarks. :He says

The [level of] thinking or intellect of so many theosophers and scholars has failed to" understand and grasp the truth of the 'position between two positions', let alone the .common people with a superficial level of understanding

And the allegory chosen by the Imām ('a) for the guidance of people with such ideas and the protection of their beliefs from deviation toward predeterminism or absolute freewill is illustrious and rational, because in this allegory two points have been highlighted, viz. dissuading the sinner and the absence of compulsion in committing .sin

The first point stresses that he is not totally left to himself and thus the notion of" tafwīḍ is invalid. Similarly, the



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.Uṣūl al-Kāfī, vol. ۱, section (bāb) on predestination and absolute freewill, ḥadīth ۱۰ -۱

second point highlights someone's not being compelled with respect to the sin he (commits."(1)

### A Firm Principle

There was a discussion about predeterminism and absolute freewill in the presence of Imām al-Riḍā ('a). The Imām ('a) addressed those who were present by saying, "Regarding this issue, do you want me to teach you a principle with which you will prevail over your opponents in a debate? Those who were present expressed interest :and the Imām ('a) thus said

إنَّ اللهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ لَمْ يُطَعْ بِإِكراهٍ، وَلَمْ يُعْصَ بِغَلَبَةٍ وَلَمْ يُهْمِلِ العِبادَ فى مُلْكِهِ.

Indeed Allah, the Almighty and Glorious, is not obeyed by compulsion and not" ".disobeyed by dominance, and He has not abandoned [His] servants in His dominion

هُوَ المالِكُ لِمَا مَلَّكَهُمْ، وَالقادِرُ عَلى ما أَقْدَرَهُمْ عَلَيهِ.

He is the Master of the things to whom He is entitled, and He is Omnipotent over the" (things on which He has power."(2)

These two statements speak of the truth of the "position between two positions" (amr bayn al-amrayn) which combines the sovereignty and omnipotence of God and man; that is, man is the owner of his own action and has power over it and also his action is within the dominion of God and predestined by Him. These two are parallel to each .other and not opposite to each other, thus requiring contradiction and opposition

### Imām al-Hādī ('a) and the Interpretation of Amr Bayn al-Amrayn

There is a reported epistle of Imām al-Ḥādī ('a) about predeterminism, absolute freewill and amr bayn al-amrayn. This epistle has been quoted by 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Shu'bah al-Ḥarrānī (one of the Shī'ah



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۱- Sharḥ Uṣūl al-Kāfī, p. ۴۱۶.

۲- Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, Al-Tawḥīd, section (bāb) on the negation of predeterminism and absolute freewill, ḥadīth ۷.

scholars during the fourth century AH) Tuḥaf al-'Uqūl and Aḥmad ibn 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib al-Ṭabarsī (one of the Shī'ah during the sixth century AH), and except in some expressions, there is no difference between these two quotations.

According to the narration of Ṭabarsī, the said epistle was a reply to the letter of the people of Ahwāz.(1)

It consists of an introduction and three general sections. One of these sections is allocated to a commentary or interpretation of amr bayn al-amrayn, and the axis of the discussion revolves around the ḥadīth of Imām al-Ṣādiq ('a) when he said, "There is neither predeterminism nor absolute freewill but rather the [correct] affair is between the two affairs."(2)

The said epistle contains subtle points in exegesis (tafsīr) and theology (kalām), and to examine them requires a separate book and it is beyond the scope of this discussion. It is sufficient for us to quote only part of that section which is related to amr bayn al-amrayn:

وَلَسْنا نَدينُ بِجَبْرٍ وَلا تَفْويضٍ، لكِنّا نَقولُ بِمَنْزِلَةٍ بَينَ المنزِلَتَينِ وَهُوَ الإمْتحانُ وَالإخْتبارُ بِالإسْتِطاعَةِ الَّتى مَلَّكَنا اللهُ وَتَعَبَّدَنا بِها عَلى ما شَهِدَ بِهِ الكتابُ وَدانَ بِهِ الأَئِمَّةُ الأبرارُ مِن آلِ الرَّسولِ صَلَواتُ اللهِ عَلَيهِم.

In the above line, by mentioning the essence of the Divine duty and test Imām al-Hādī ('a) has demonstrated the incorrectness of the notion of predetermination (jabr), and by stating that the ability which man possesses is a Divine grace which is bestowed upon him by God at every moment, the Imām ('a) has pointed



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١ - Ahwāz: city in southwestern Iran, the administrative center of Khūzestān (Khūzistān) Province. [Trans.]

٢ - In Tuḥaf al-'Uqūl, instead of "but rather the [correct] affair is between the two affairs," what is stated is "but rather the [correct] position is between the two positions."

.(out the incorrectness of the notion of absolute freewill (tafwīḍ

Then, in order to explain this subtle truth, the Imām ('a) has cited a parable which is as follows: someone has a servant and although he is aware of his servant's spiritual and mental condition, he wants to test him. Accordingly, he gives him ownership of some of his properties and mentions some points related to them. He reminds him that this ownership is temporary and thereafter there shall be a longer life. If he (servant) will utilize the properties in the way pleasing to him (master), he will enjoy many rewards .in the longer life. But if he will act contrary to that, he will incur punishment

During the time when the servant is the owner of the said properties, the master always gives him advice and admonition. Then, after the end of the term, he (master) takes absolute possession of the servant and properties again (although during that term, he had not totally severed his sense of ownership of them), acting upon his promises and threats. The said servant is neither compelled by his master nor is he totally abandoned alone. Neither predetermination nor absolute freewill is applicable .to him

The application of this parable to the subject of our discussion is to say that God is the Great Master and the servants are the Children of Adam; the properties refer to the all-encompassing power of God and the philosophy of test is the expression of God's .wisdom and power

p: ۲۶۸

.The temporary life refers to the life in this world

Some of the properties whose ownership is given to the servant refer to the ability endowed by God to His servants. The admonitions related to the properties refer to the instructions of the prophets of God and the things they prohibit are the ways of Satan. And the eternal life and Divine promises refer to the abode in the Hereafter (and the perpetual blessings therein.(۱

**The Philosophical Interpretation of Amr Bayn al-Amrayn**

The philosophical interpretation of amr bayn al-amrayn is based upon two :philosophical principles

As dictated by the authenticity and unity of the essence of existence (wijūd), . ۱ existence in all its manifestations and levels has its special traces, and as such, citation of the actions and effects of beings – be they material and immaterial, animate or inanimate – is a real citation. For instance, the cause-and-effect relationship among the creatures can also be interpreted to be based upon the same principle; that is, the existence of ontological relationship and existential .concomitance between the action and the agent, the effect and the cause

Contingent existence is a dependent and wanting identity, and this dependence and .۲ indigence is its very essence and identity, and not something added and accidental to it; otherwise, it would have acquired a sort of independence and self-sufficiency and it would have been rival of and equal to the Necessary Being, and this is in conflict with the essence of the Divine Unity (tawḥīd) in Essence of God. And since origination (ījād) is



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Tuḥaf al-'Uqūl (Qum: Baṣīratī, n.d.), pp. ۳۴۱-۳۵۶; Ṭabarsī, Al-Iḥtijāj (Mashhad: Nashr -۱ .al-Murtaḍā, n.d.), pp. ۴۴۹-۴۵۳

different from existence (wujūd), it follows that the contingent existences have no .independence in origination and action, as they do in their very existence

The clear outcome of these two principles is that man's actions have ontological and real relationship with his ability and freewill and he is indeed the agent of his actions [and therefore the notion of predeterminism is invalid]. However, since his existence is a creation and product of God, his action – while having ontological and real .emanation from Him – is also connected to God

Hence, the notion of tafwīḍ is also invalid, and since these two citations are parallel to each other and not accidental, there will be no contradiction to follow. This interpretation is one of the original ideas of Ṣadr al-Muta'allihīn and has been adopted by the followers of transcendental wisdom (ḥikmat-e muta'āliyah) after him.(١) Ḥakīm :Sabziwārī has brought out the said proof in this way

لكِنْ كَما الوُجودُ مَنْسوبٌ لَنا فَالفِعْلُ فِعْلُ اللهِ وَهُوَ فِعْلُنا

,Yet, as the existence is attributed to us

(The action is hence the action of Allah and it is our action.(٢

Imām al-Khumaynī (may his soul be sanctified) has also interpreted amr bayn al-(amrayn in the same way.(٣

### A Study of the Book of the Self

The best guide in discerning this profound subject and the manner of attributing man's actions to God as well as to himself is no other than the book of the self which is a microcosm of the world of creation. For instance, it has been emphasized in the Holy Qur'an and traditions to study and



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.Al-Asfār al-Arba'ah, vol. ۶, pp. ٣٧٣-٣٧٨ -١

Sharḥ-e Manẓūmah, station (madṣad) ٣, singularity (farīdah) ٢, "ghurar fī 'umūm - ٢

qudratuh ta‘ālā.”

٣- Ṭalab wa Irādah, pp. ٧٢-٧٣.

:reflect on it

( وَفِی أَنْفُسِکُمْ أَفَلا تُبْصِرُونَ )

(And in your own souls [are signs]. Will you not then perceive?”(۱“

مَنْ عَرَفَ نَفْسَهُ فَقَدْ عَرَفَ رَبَّهُ.

”.Whoever knows his self knows his Lord“

The actions done by the various bodily limbs and members of man – while really and ontologically attributed to those limbs and are truly considered actions of those limbs – are also those of the self (soul). For instance, seeing and hearing are undoubtedly actions of the eyes and ears respectively and at the same time, they are actions of .the soul

Although the soul is a reality, therefore, since it is beyond matter or materiality, it is not confined to a particular place or direction, and it schematically encompasses human bodily limbs and parts and none of these limbs could function without the .control of the soul

The identity and unicity of the soul is a spark of the Identity and Unicity of God, and the type of attribution and citation all of contingent beings and their actions and effects to the One God is the same with the attribution and unicity of the action and (effects of man's bodily limbs and members to his soul.(۲

In conclusion, it must be noted that the Māturdī theologians have interpreted the theory of kasb (acquisition) in such a way that it is identical to amr bayn al-amrayn. In (fact, many of them have clearly stated this point.(۳

#### Review Questions

What is the statement of Imām 'Alī ('a) regarding those who regard the Divine .۱ decree and

.Sūrat al-Dhāriyāt ۵۱:۲۱ -۱

See Al-Asfār al-Arba'ah, vol. ۶, pp. ۳۷۷-۳۷۹; Ṭalab wa Irādah, p. ۸۲; Jabr wa Ikhtiyār, -۲
.p. ۲۸۸

.For information on their views, see 'Alī Rabbānī Gulpāygānī, Al-Kalām al-Maqārin -۳

?providence as concomitant to man being under compulsion

۲. State the view of the justice-oriented (‘adliyyah) theologians regarding man’s freedom.

۳. How many views are put forth regarding the interpretation of ikhtiyār (free-will)?

۴. Write down and criticize the theory of tafwīḍ (delegation) in brief.

۵. Write down the theory of kasb (acquisition) along with the refutation to it.

۶. Explain concisely the theory of amr bayn al-amrayn (position between two positions).

۷. State the brief historical background of the theory of amr bayn al-amrayn.

۸. What did Imām al-Ṣādiq (‘a) said in reply to the question about the Divine decree (qadar) and predeterminism (jabr)? State it along with the exposition of Ṣadr al-Muta’allihīn.

۹. How did Imām al-Hādī (‘a) interpret amr bayn al-amrayn?

۱۰. Write down the philosophical interpretation of amr bayn al-amrayn.

## Lesson ۲۷: Misgivings of the Predeterminists

**point**

In theological books, some misgivings on the issue of man’s free-will have been mentioned and by citing them some individuals have been inclined toward predeterminism (jabr). These misgivings have focused on some theological and ideological teachings and principles. The theological principles cited by the predeterminists are as follows:

۱. The Divine decree and providence, or destiny;

۲. The eternal knowledge and will of God;

۳. The Divine Unity (tawḥīd) in Creatorship;

۴. The universality of God’s power; and

۵. The Divine ways of guidance and misguidance.

Now, we shall scrutinize the predeterminists’ misgivings on the basis of the said principles.

### The Divine Decree, Predestination and the Eternal Knowledge of God

The common and deterministic interpretation of the Divine decree and providence is that the web of destiny as an unseen or hidden factor which puts under its sway every person, drawing

p: ۲۷۲

him to whatever direction it desires from the moment of birth up to the point of death. The proponents of this theory would also cite reason and revelation to support their views, saying thus:

Since all happenings are inevitable and predetermined prior to the occurrence, their materialization is definite and unavoidable. The voluntary actions of man are also not an exception to this general rule and their materialization is definite and determined. The assumption of definiteness and fixedness is in conflict with free-will. For instance, the Holy Qur'an also explicitly declares, thus:

( مَا أَصَابَ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ فِی الأرْضِ وَلا فِی أَنْفُسِکُمْ إِلا فِی کِتَابٍ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ نَبْرَأَهَا إِنَّ ذَلِکَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ )

"No affliction visits the earth or yourselves but it is in a Book before We bring it about —that is indeed easy for Allah."(1)

#### The Correct Interpretation of Qaḍā and Qadr

The word qaḍā literally means faṣl (separation), qaṭ' (rupture) and dispeller of ambiguity and doubt. Sometimes, it takes the form of word (qawl) and in the form of action (fi'l) at other times. It is used to refer to God as well as to the human being.

Qaḍā in the following verse means the verbal qaḍā of God:

( وَقَضَى رَبُّکَ أَلا تَعْبُدُوا إِلا إِيَّاهُ )

"Your Lord has decreed that you shall not worship anyone except Him."(2)

And in the following verse it refers to qaḍā of God's action:

( فَقَضَاهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ فِی يَوْمَيْنِ )

"Then He set them up as seven heavens in two days."(3)

Similarly, what is referred to in the expression "The judge decrees (qaḍā) so-and-so" is the

۱- ۵۷:۲۲ Sūrat al-Ḥadīd.

۲- ۱۷:۲۳ Sūrat al-Isrā’ (or Banī Isrā’īl).

۳- ۴۱:۱۲ Sūrat al-Fuṣṣilat.

human verbal qaḍā. And what is meant by the word qaḍaytum in the following verse is :the qaḍā of a human action

( فَإِذَا قَضَيْتُمْ مَنَاسِكَكُمْ )

(And when you finish your rites…"(١"

(And every definite utterance is also called qaḍiyyah.(٢

In all cases where the word qaḍā is used, definiteness and certainty are implied while ambiguity and doubt are dispelled. For instance, before the judge issues his judgment, there is ambiguity and uncertainty with respect to the guilt of the accused, but after the issuance of the said judgment, this ambiguity and uncertainty disappear. In the same manner, before a person decides to do something, its realization cannot .be determined and unclear but after he decides, it turns into something definite

Given this, the essence of the cosmic qaḍā of God can be inferred, for all the contingent beings are created by God. On one hand, the wise will of God is to create His creatures through specific causes and effects. Accordingly, prior to the materialization of the complete cause of each of the phenomena, it is vacillating between occurrence and non-occurrence, but after the materialization of its .complete cause, its occurrence is definite

It is evident that as long as there is no Divine will or desire for the materialization of a phenomenon, its complete cause will not be materialized. In conclusion, the Divine decree (qaḍā) is one of the Attributes of God's Action which can be abstracted from (the Station of Action of God on the basis of its complete cause.(٣

Since God



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١- Sūrat al-Baqarah ٢:٢٠٠.

٢- Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, Al-Mufradāt, under the word qaḍā.

٣- Al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān, vol. ١٣, pp. ٧٢-٧٣.

knows this certainty (qaṭ‘iyyah) from the beginning, His essential knowledge of the .said certainty is His essential decree

The word qadar or qadr literally means the measurement or magnitude of a thing, and with respect to the existing phenomena while considering the principle of causation, it refers to the existential characteristics and properties of each of the (phenomena which are the effects of characteristics and properties of its cause.(١

In other words, each of the parts of the cause provides its own suitable measurement and form to the effect, and the occurrence of the effect is consistent and concordant (with the totality of measurements determined for it by the complete cause.(٢

What is meant by the Divine decree is that God has foreknowledge of the limits and characteristics of each of the creatures and as such, they will be materialized. For :instance, the Holy Qur’an states

( وَإِنْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا عِنْدَنَا خَزَائِنُهُ وَمَا نُنَزِّلُهُ إِلَّا بِقَدَرٍ مَعْلُومٍ )

There is not a thing but that its sources are with Us, and We do not send it down“ (except in a known measure.”(٣

:It is also stated, thus

( قَدْ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدْرًا )

(Certainly Allah has set a measure for everything.”(٤“

( إِنَّا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَاهُ بِقَدَرٍ )

(Indeed We have created everything in a measure.”(٥“

( وَكُلُّ شَيْءٍ عِنْدَهُ بِمِقْدَارٍ )

(And everything is by [precise] measure with Him.”(۶“

It can thus be inferred that qadar (decree) has two stage: (١) the stage prior to the existence of the thing (mental decree) and (٢) the stage parallel to

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۱- Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Ṭabāṭabāʾī, Nihāyat al-Ḥikmah, chap. ۱۲.

۲- Ṭabāṭabāʾī, Shīʿah dar Islām, p. ۷۷.

۳- Sūrat al-Ḥijr ۱۵:۲۱.

۴- Sūrat al-Ṭalāq ۶۵:۳.

۵- Sūrat al-Qamar ۵۴:۴۹.

۶- Sūrat al-Raʿd ۱۳:۸.

(the existence of the thing (actual decree).(١)

In a tradition narrated by Yūnus ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān from Imām al-Riḍā (‘a), qaḍā and qadar have been interpreted to mean the existential fixedness and limits of the things. For instance, on the interpretation of qadar, it is thus stated:

هِیَ الهَنْدَسَهُ وَوَضْعُ الحُدودِ مِنَ البَقاءِ والفَناءِ.

"It is the geometry and determination of the limits [of a thing] in terms of subsistence and extinction."

And on the interpretation of qaḍā, it is thus stated:

هُوَ الإبرامُ وَإقامَهُ العَینِ.

"It is to strengthen and build up a reality."(٢)

## Reinforcement of the Free-will on the Basis of the Principle of Qaḍā and Qadar

The above analysis and interpretation of qaḍā and qadar is not only not in conflict with man's free-will but it even reinforces it, for as stated earlier, qaḍā means qaṭ‘iyyah (finality or fixedness) of the occurrence of an action which differs according to the realization of its complete cause. And since the ontological peculiarity of human actions is their being adherents and free, it follows that as demanded by the realness and conformity of the Divine knowledge with the known thing (ma‘lūm) as well as the fixedness and certainty of the Divine will, the actions of human agents are volitional and voluntary and not fatalistic and involuntary.

In reply to the misgiving regarding predeterminism on the basis of the eternal knowledge of God, Ṣadr al-Muta'allihīn has said:

"Although the knowledge of God is a cause (sabābiyyah) with respect to the materialization of man's action, its being a cause is through the agency of man's ability and freewill, for his ability and freewill are also

.Al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qur’ān, vol. ١٢, p. ١۴۴ -١

.Uṣūl al-Kāfī, vol. ١, section (bāb) on the Divine decree and predeterminism, ḥadīth ۴ -٢

among the causes of the materialization of his action. The incumbency of the materialization of the action thus emanates from man's ability and free-will. (Incumbency emanates from free-will and it is not in conflict with it."(1)

A refutation is also given to this misgiving that if the knowledge of the past is the source of the action's fatalistic nature, God cannot also be a free agent. Sa'd al-Dīn al-Taftazānī has also mentioned these two answers in refuting the notion of predeterminism on the basis of the eternal knowledge and will of God.

Moreover, man's conscience differentiates his voluntary actions although they may be the same from the perspective of the foreknowledge of God.

#### God's Will and Man's Free-will

The notion of predeterminism on the basis of the will of God maintains that as dictated by reason ('aql) and revelation (naql), no phenomenon will come into existence without the will and decree of God, and on this basis, man's actions are also linked with the will of God. And since God's will does not deviate from His purpose and that His purpose will definitely happen, the materialization of man's actions is something inevitable and certain, and in this case, the human free-will and desire are nothing but hypothetical and have no reality.

The reply to this objection becomes clear from the points stated above and does not need further elaboration because God's will and desire are expressed through man's ability and free-will, and as a result, they are in no conflict with the voluntary nature of his action. In fact,



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۱- Al-Asfār al-Arba'ah, vol. ۶, p. ۳۸۵.

if man's actions were not voluntary, these will become necessary for God's will to deviate from His purpose.(1)

**?Is Will a Voluntary Action**

Here, there is a popular misgiving being raised and that is, since the chain of causes of the events ends up with the will of God, the emergence of man's will also emanates from God's will, and as dictated by the inevitability of God's will, the materialization of the will in man is also a fixed and predetermined matter, and as a result, all his voluntary actions are also predetermined.(2)

The reply to this objection is that the criterion for man's independence is not that he is a free agent. Instead, the essence of free-will regarding man is that he is naturally and innately a selector being, and this is his innate and ontological nature. However, the essence of free-will is in the actions of his bodily limbs and parts.

Awareness of the action is also regarded as one of the bases of voluntary actions and it is said that voluntary action is that which is derived from knowledge and will. That is, we become aware of man's nature as free and selector through the agency of knowledge and will, but with respect to his internal or inward actions, knowledge (which is acquired and apart from man's essence) and will are not the key to free-will. For instance, whenever numerous questions are posed on a person who acquires expertise in one field of science, he would instantly construct various mental forms and infer



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۱- Al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān, vol. ۱, p. ۱۰۹.

۲- One of the exponents of this misgiving in Christian Theology is Spinoza (۱۶۳۲-۱۶۷۷), a famous predeterminist Jewish philosopher. See Sayr-e Ḥikmat dar Orūpā (The Trend of Philosophy in Europe), vol. ۲, p. ۵۴.

.the suitable answers from the abstract and simple mental forms

There is no doubt that the said action is one of the voluntary actions of man although they are not derived from [acquired] knowledge or will. The element of will and other inward actions of a person are also like that. Therefore, will is a voluntary action of the 'self' and it is not derived from another will. And in view of this peculiarity, it emanates from the will of God and its outcome, as stated earlier, is the reinforcement of free-will.

This reply can be observed briefly in the words of Ṣadr al-Muta'allihīn(۱) and can be found extensively and explicitly in the words of Imām al-Khumaynī (r).(۲)

## The Divine Unity in Creation and the Issue of Predetermination

### point

One of the stages of the Divine Unity (tawḥīd) is tawḥīd in Creatorship (khāliqiyyah) which is supported by rational and textual proofs. According to this rational and religious principle, human actions are a creation of God. According to the determinists, to suppose that man is the agent and originator of his voluntary actions is in conflict with the stated principle. As such, defending the principle of the Divine Unity in Creatorship demands that we must reject man's agency and influence in his voluntary actions and we must consider him compelled.

### Reply

The attribution of Creatorship (khāliqiyyah) to God has two meanings. One is that in the world of being, there is no creator and effector – whether independent or dependent – except God. This assumption necessitates negation of the principle of cause and effect,



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۱- Al-Asfār al-Arba'ah, vol. ۶, p. ۱۶۲.

۲- Ṭalab wa Irādah, p. ۱۰۹; Jabr wa Irādah, pp. ۲۰۴-۲۰۷.

and as a result, all created beings are direct creations of God and He is the Direct Cause, as the Ash'arīs do believe.(1)

The other meaning is that there is no independent and self-existing Creator and Cause except God, and although the order of creation is that of cause and effect and that some creatures are agents while others are actions and some are causes while others are effects, the agents and causes – just as they are intermediaries of and in need of God for their existence – they are intermediaries and dependent to God. According to this assumption, man is the agent of his own actions and his ability has an effect but not independently; rather, it is dependent on the power of God and it is below it.

### The Universality of the Divine Power and Man's Freewill

Another principle cited by the determinists is the universality of God's power although believing that man's ability is a factor in the materialization of his actions is in conflict with the said principle, because since combining two effective powers in the creation of a thing is impossible, whenever man's ability is influential in the existence of his action, the said action must be outside the domain of God's power.(2)

This misgiving is caused by the assumption of the human ability's independence in causing something, because with this assumption, his ability is rivals and at logger-heads with the power of God. And it is evident that combining two independent powers in the materialization of an action is impossible. As a result, defending the



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1- Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid, vol. ۴, p. ۱۰۵.
2- Ibid., vol. ۸, p. ۱۴۸.

principle of the universality of God's power and its being effective in the materialization of man's action necessitates that we must consider man's ability .devoid of any effect

Such understanding or interpretation of man's ability ignores man's innate indigence and dependence of his existence and attributes on God. This error is exclusive to the Ash'arī theologians. In fact, the Mu'tazilīs have also the same incorrect interpretation of man's ability and with the motive of defending the justice of God and proving the free-will of man, they were thus inclined toward tafwīḍ (absolute freewill) as stated .earlier

The fact of the matter is that man's ability is below the power of God and combining the two powers – one being independent and the other being dependent – in the performance of an action is in no way impossible. In other words, since the salient feature of power is to exert influence, one must regard man's ability as influential in his action (thereby refuting the Ash'arī view) and since man is dependent and not independent in his existence and attributes, one must not suppose that his ability is independent in exerting influence (thereby refuting the Mu'tazilī notion), and this is the position between two positions (amr bayn al-amrayn) which has been explained .earlier

## The Divine Guidance and Misguidance and Man's Freewill

### point

In some Qur'anic verses, it is clearly stated that God guides whoever He wills and :misguides whoever He wills. For instance, it is thus stated

( وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلا بِلِسَانِ قَوْمِهِ لِيُبَيِّنَ لَهُمْ فَيُضِلُّ اللَّهُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي مَنْ

يَشَاءُ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ )

We did not send any apostle except with the language of his people, so that he might" make [Our messages] clear to them. Then Allah leads astray whomever He wishes, (and He guides whomsoever He wishes, and He is the All-mighty, the All-wise."(1)

In a bid to prove their claim, the determinists maintain that such verses convey the basic meaning, but such an argument is utterly weak and baseless because in order to obtain the real meaning of the verses of the Qur'an, it is necessary to employ the method of interpreting the Qur'an by the Qur'an, and one must study a set of verses through another set because as Imām 'Alī ('a) said, some verses of the Qur'an are :interpretations of some other verses

يَنْطِقُ بَعْضُهُ بِبَعْضٍ وَيَشْهَدُ بَعْضُهُ عَلى بَعْضٍ.

(Some speak about some others and some testify to some others."(2)"

While taking into account the said principle, we shall embark on interpreting the verses quoted above so as to clarify the truth of the matter concerning God's .guidance and misguidance and their connection with the issue of man's free-will

First of all, in some verses of the Qur'an, guidance and misguidance have been :delegated to man's free-will and desire, as it is thus stated

( وَقُلِ الْحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّكُمْ فَمَن شَاء فَلْيُؤْمِن وَمَن شَاء فَلْيَكْفُرْ )

And say, '[This is] the truth from your Lord: let anyone who wishes believe it, and let" (anyone who wishes disbelieve it'."(3)

:It is also said, thus

( إِنَّ هَذِهِ تَذْكِرَةٌ فَمَنْ شَاءَ اتَّخَذَ



۱- Sūrat Ibrāhīm ۱۴:۴. The following verses have similar contents: ( أَفَمَنْ زُيِّنَ لَهُ سُوءُ عَمَلِهِ فَرَآهُ

حَسَناً فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يُضِلُّ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِى مَنْ يَشَاءُ فَلا تَذْهَبْ نَفْسُكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَسَرَاتٍ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ ) "Is someone the evil of whose conduct is presented as decorous to him, so he regards it as good [like one who is truly virtuous]?" (Sūrat Fāṭir (or al-Malā'ikah) ٣٥:٨)

( وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا صُمٌّ وَبُكْمٌ فِى الظُّلُمَاتِ مَنْ يَشَأِ اللَّهُ يُضْلِلْهُ وَمَنْ يَشَأْ يَجْعَلْهُ عَلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيم ) "Those who deny Our signs are deaf and dumb, in a manifold darkness. Allah leads astray whoever He wishes, and whomever He wishes He puts him on a straight path." (Sūrat al-An'ām ٦:٣٩)

( وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَكِنْ يُضِلُّ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِى مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَلَتُسْأَلُنَّ عَمَّا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ) "Had Allah wished, He would have made you one community, but He leads astray whomever He wishes and guides whomever He wishes, and you will surely be questioned concerning what you used to do." (Sūrat al-Naḥl ١٦:٩٣)

٢- Nahj al-Balāghah, Sermon ١٣٣.

٣- Sūrat al-Kahf ١٨:٢٩.

إِلَى رَبِّهِ سَبِيلا )

(This is indeed a reminder. So let anyone who wishes take the way toward his Lord."(۱"

( إِنْ هُوَ إِلّا ذِكْرٌ لِلْعَالَمِينَ  لِمَنْ شَاءَ مِنْكُمْ أَنْ يَسْتَقِيمَ )

(It is just a reminder for all the nations, for those of you who wish to be steadfast."(۲"

Of course, in order to avoid thinking that man's free-will or will power acts independently, and thus, he himself is the independent agent of his voluntary actions, there is a reminder that man's free-will cannot be formed except through the will of :God

( وَمَا تَشَاءُونَ إِلّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ )

(But you do not wish unless it is wished by Allah, the Lord of the worlds."(۳"

Secondly, in other verses of the Qur'an the guidance given to those who are guided and the misguidance experienced by those who are misguided as well as the reasons .behind them which lie within man's free-will and ability have been stated

#### Elements of Guidance

Faith and clinging to Allah .۱

( فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَاعْتَصَمُوا بِهِ فَسَيُدْخِلُهُمْ فِی رَحْمَهٍ مِنْهُ وَفَضْلٍ وَيَهْدِيهِمْ إِلَيْهِ صِرَاطًا مُسْتَقِيمًا )

As for those who have faith in Allah, and hold fast to Him, He will admit them to His" (mercy and grace, and He will guide them on a straight path to Him."(۴

Doing that which pleases Allah .۲

( قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ نُورٌ وَكِتَابٌ مُبِينٌ  يَهْدِی بِهِ اللَّهُ مَنِ اتَّبَعَ رِضْوَانَهُ سُبُلَ السَّلامِ وَيُخْرِجُهُمْ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ بِإِذْنِهِ وَيَهْدِيهِمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ )

Certainly there has come to you a light from Allah and"

۱ - Sūrat al-Muzzammil ۷۳:۱۹; Sūrat al-Insān (or al-Dahr) ۷۶:۲۷. Sūrat al-Muddaththir ۷۴:۵۵ and Sūrat al-'Abasa ۸۰:۱۲ have the same contents.

۲- ۸۱:۲۹ Sūrat al-Takwīr.

۳- ۸۱:۲۹ Sūrat al-Takwīr.

۴- ۴:۱۷۵ Sūrat al-Nisā'.

a manifest Book. With it Allah guides those who follow [the course of] His pleasure to the ways of peace, and brings them out from darkness into light by His will, and guides (them to a straight path."(١

Struggle in the way of Allah .٣

( وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمَعَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ )

As for those who strive in Us, We shall surely guide them in Our ways, and Allah is" (indeed with the virtuous."(٢

Repentance and humility to Allah .٣

( اللَّهُ يَجْتَبِي إِلَيْهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي إِلَيْهِ مَنْ يُنِيبُ )

Allah chooses for it whomever He wishes and He guides to it whoever returns" (penitently."(٣

### Elements of Misguidance

Friendship with the enemies of God .١

( يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا عَدُوِّي وَعَدُوَّكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ تُلْقُونَ إِلَيْهِم بِالْمَوَدَّةِ... وَمَن يَفْعَلْهُ مِنكُمْ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ سَوَاءَ السَّبِيلِ )

O you who have faith! Do not take My enemy and your enemy for friends, [secretly]" offering them affection (for they have certainly defied whatever has come to you of the truth, expelling the Apostle and you, because you have faith in Allah, your Lord)... (and whoever among you does that has certainly strayed from the right way."(۴

Following the chiefs of corruption and arrogance .٢

( وَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا إِنَّا أَطَعْنَا سَادَتَنَا وَكُبَرَاءَنَا فَأَضَلُّونَا السَّبِيلا )

And they will say, 'Our Lord! We obeyed our leaders and elders, and they led us" (astray from the way."(۵

Imaginary and delusive calculation .٣

( أُنْظُرْ كَيْفَ ضَرَبُوا لَكَ الأَمْثَالَ فَضَلُّوا فَلا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ سَبِيلا )

Look, how they coin epithets for you; so they go astray, and cannot find a“

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۱- ۵:۱۵-۱۶ Sūrat al-Mā’idah.

۲- ۲۹:۶۹ Sūrat ‘Ankabūt.

۳- ۴۲:۱۳ Sūrat al-Shūrā.

۴- ۶۰:۱ Sūrat al-Mumtaḥanah.

۵- ۳۳:۶۷ Sūrat al-Aḥzāb.

(way."(1

Attachment to materialistic life .۴

( الَّذِينَ يَسْتَحِبُّونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا عَلَى الآخِرَهِ وَيَصُدُّونَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَيَبْغُونَهَا عِوَجًا أُولَئِكَ فِى ضَلالٍ بَعِيدٍ )

They are] those who prefer the life of this world to the Hereafter, and bar [others]]" (from the way of Allah, and seek to make it crooked. They are in extreme error."(۲

Association with the deviants .۵

( يَا وَيْلَتَى لَيْتَنِى لَمْ أَتَّخِذْ فُلانًا خَلِيلا  لَقَدْ أَضَلَّنِى عَنِ الذِّكْرِ بَعْدَ إِذْ جَاءَنِى وَكَانَ الشَّيْطَانُ لِلإِنْسَانِ خَذُولا )

Woe to me! I wish I had not taken so and so as a friend! Certainly he led me astray" (from the Reminder after it had come to me, and Satan is a deserter of man."(۳

A study of the verses quoted above clearly shows that man's guidance and misguidance – though this cannot be materialized without the cosmic will and decree of God and not in an involuntary and fatalistic way – happen through specific causes and factors which are within man's control. Given this, one can discern the real meaning of the verses "He guides whomever He wishes" and "He leads astray whoever He wishes" and realize that God's will to guide or misguide people is .consistent with what each of them deserves

**Review Questions**

?What is the correct interpretation of qaḍā and qadar .۱

?Are God's decree and power in conflict with man's free-will .۲

Write down the predeterminists' misgiving by citing the will of God along with the .۳ .refutation to it

?What is the criterion for man's free-will .۴

Present and criticize the .۵

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۱- ۱۷:۴۸ Sūrat al-Isrā’ (or Banī Isrā’īl).

۲- ۱۴:۳ Sūrat Ibrāhīm.

۳- ۲۵:۲۸-۲۹ Sūrat al-Furqān.

.predeterminists' misgiving by citing the Creatorship (khāliqiyyah) of God

۶. Present and criticize the predeterminists' misgiving by citing the universality of God's power.

۷. How are the Divine guidance and misguidance compatible with man's free-will?

۸. Write down three examples of the elements of guidance and misguidance while taking into account Qur'anic verses.

## Lesson ۲۸: The Mandatoriness of Obligation

### point

One of the issues put forth by theologians concerning the justice of God is the issue of taklīf (obligation or duty). The definition of taklīf and its types, the philosophy of taklīf and its mandatoriness, and the conditions and salient features of taklīf are among the topics discussed in this regard. This question has direct connection to the doctrine called "necessity of religion."

### Definition and Classification

In the lexicon, taklīf is derived from kalafat which means to be in hardship (mushaqqah), and technically, it is defined in different ways, the most comprehensive of which is as follows:

إِنَّهُ بَعْثُ مَنْ تَجِبُ طاعَتُهُ اِبتِداءً عَلى ما فيهِ كُلْفَةٌ وَمَشَقَّةٌ.

That is to say that taklīf means to dispatch and command someone who is primarily obligatory to obey to do something coupled with heaviness and hardship.(۱) Given the adverb ibtidā'an (primarily), the dispatch and command of a prophet, Imām or other individuals who are obligatory to obey according to the command of God are not included. Taklīf, then, is exclusive only to the dispatch and command of God.

The attachment of taklīf to hardship means that making it obligatory according to a religious command is coupled with the said attribute (hardship), although the said

action may be pleasant

p: ۲۸۶

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.Qawā'id al-Murād, p. ۱۱۴; Irshād al-Ṭālibiyyīn, p. ۲۷۲ -۱

and desirable to the person. One example is the eating of some meat of an offered (sacrificial animal by the one who performs hajj al-tamattu‘.(١

Taklīf is attached sometimes to a belief and at other times to a practice, and a belief may be purely rational, purely textual, or rational (‘aqlī) and textual (naqlī). Examples of purely rational belief are the beliefs in the existence of God, His knowledge, power, and wisdom; that is, beliefs on which the religious proof depends. Such beliefs cannot be proved except through the intellect and what exists in the religious texts .concerning them that are instructive (irshādī) and confirmatory (ta’yīdī) in nature

Purely textual beliefs are beliefs which cannot be proved by the intellect; Examples are those pertaining to the questioning in the grave, the Scale (mīzān), the Path (ṣirāṭ) and the like. Meanwhile, an example of the belief which is textual as well as rational is .(the belief in the Divine Unity (tawḥīd

Sometimes, practical taklīf is also purely rational; among them, for instance, are the mandatoriness of discharging a trust, gratefulness to a benefactor, kindness to parents, and renunciation of injustice and lying. There are also times when practical taklīf is textual; for instance, many of the secondary laws concerning the ritual prayer, .fasting (ṣawm), alms-tax (zakāt), and the like

From another perspective, it can be said that all the religious laws are rational as well as textual because since these laws follow a series of real criteria, interests and ’noumenal corruption, they are called ‘rational



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١ - Ḥajj al-tamattu‘: a type of pilgrimage which is applicable to those living outside Mecca, i.e. out of limits of the ḥarām (the precinct of the Grand [.Mosque, Ka‘bah and/or the surrounding holy places in Mecca). [Trans

because the intellect declares the need for this criteria, interests and corruption. And (since they are declared through the revelation, they are called 'religious' (shar'ī).(۱)

Another classification of taklīf is to identify it as obligatory (wājib), prohibited (ḥarām), recommendatory (mustaḥabb), abominable (makrūh), or permissible (mubāḥ). In this :regard, Ḥakīm Lāhījī has thus said

Taklīf which means 'command' is a Divine address which pertains to the actions of [God's] servants which are described as good or bad through iqtiḍā' (requirement) or takhayyur (giving options). Iqtiḍā' means a demand which pertains to an action or non-performance of it while takhayyur means to settle down whether to do or not to .do an act

If the demand is thus related to an action, it is called good (ḥasan) because demanding for something bad is bad according to any reasonable person. And if the demand is related to relinquishing an action, the said action is bad because to demand abandoning something good is bad, and to demand an action – if it is not permissible to abandon – is called wājib (obligatory), and if it is permissible to abandon, it is called mandūb, and if it is required to abandon, it is called ḥarām (prohibited). If the action is permissible, it is called makrūh (abominable), and the action which pertains to (takhayyur is called mubāḥ (permissible)."(۲)

#### The Philosophy behind Obligation

There is no doubt that taklīf (obliging) is good but it is an action of God, and His action is good. But as to what the form of goodness of



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.See Gawhar-e Murād, p. ۳۴۷ -۱

.Gawhar-e Murād, p. ۳۴۶ -۲

taklīf is, this is something connected to the philosophy of taklīf and the motive behind it, and the justice-oriented (‘adliyyah) theologians have stated some aspects of it.

۱. One reason for the goodness of taklīf is that it provides the ground for a person’s receipt of great rewards in the Hereafter. According to the theologians, the otherworldly rewards are not only the receipt of otherworldly pleasures and enjoyments but rather they are accompanied by God’s expression of special praise, honor, recognition and appreciation.

That is, on the Day of Resurrection God shall express His special praise, honor, recognition and appreciation to the doers of good, and also give them their otherworldly rewards. It is clear that special honor and praise are unacceptable unless they are worthy of them, and it is like the case of an ignorant person who is honored in the way the learned are honored.

The merit of receiving such special honor and praise depends on the outcome of the test to be given to them. Religious obligation, in reality, is the very scheme for this divine test. Taklīf, therefore, provides the ground to man to earn merit to receive otherworldly rewards, and there is no doubt concerning the goodness of such important motive.(۱)

۲. The religious obligations are manifestations of grace in relation to the rational obligations because whenever a person observes acts of worship and religious commands such as the ritual prayer, fasting, zakāt and the like, he is more prepared to observe rational obligations such as



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۱- See Kashf al-Murād, station (maqṣad) ۳, chap. ۳, issue ۱۱; Qawā’id al-Marām, p. ۱۱۵; Irshād al-Ṭālibiyyīn, p. ۲۷۳.

acquisition of knowledge, recognition of the rights of individuals, justice, avoidance of injustice, and the like. Any manifestation of grace, for that purpose, is acceptable, nay (obligatory.(١

The purpose behind the creation of the human being is for him to attain proximity to .٣ God (qurb ilallāh), thereby achieving his ideal perfection. On one hand, the essence of man consists of two faculties – intellect or reason (‘aql) and carnal desire (shahwah) – which are somehow opposite to each other, and the felicity of man lies in his ability to set the faculty of shahwah under the control of ‘aql so as to address all his physical .needs and also to attain spiritual perfections

The materialization of this purpose requires a precise and comprehensive program through which extremes on any of the two faculties could be prevented, and the principle of justice could prevail over the material and spiritual life of man. On one hand, most people could not grasp such a program. In fact, no one could know the most perfect form of this program. The Divine wisdom, therefore, necessitates that a (special program as religious laws and duties be prescribed for the human beings.(٢

From the perspective of social life, religious duties are also beneficial, nay . ۴ necessary, for the human beings because social life is in need of an all-encompassing law that stipulates the rights and duties of individuals in relation to one another. As the human laws lack comprehensiveness on account of man’s intellectual limitations and do



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.See Gawhar-e Murād, p. ٣۵٢ -١

.See ibid., pp. ٣۵٣-٣۵۴ -٢

not include spiritual and sacred dimensions, they do not have internal executive .guarantee

They are also incapable of purifying and refining the human souls, because the most important element of self-purification and refinement are faith and submission to the Perpetual Power. The religious duties, however, incorporates all those qualities as they stem from eternal knowledge of God and are based upon the belief in the Divine .(Unity (tawḥīd) and the Resurrection (ma‘ād

As such, man accepts them with utmost confidence and acts upon them from a perspective of sanctity [and spirituality]. In this case, they keep alive the remembrance of God in the hearts as well as inform the people of the life after death and otherworldly rewards and punishments. As a result, apart from spiritual benefits (and social effects, they have also significant spiritual and educational benefits.(١

#### Obligation and Power

One of the important conditions of obligation is that the obliged person (mukallaf) must have the ability to fulfill his obligation. For this reason, any unbearable obligation is bad, and it is impossible to attribute it to God. Unbearable obligation has two types. One is that the essence of the action is one of the impossible things such as coincidence of opposites. Another is that the action is possible but the one obliged is incapable of doing so, such as flying on the air without the use of appropriate means and devises. The Holy Qur’an explicitly states that God does not oblige anyone with :anything which is beyond his ability to do

لاَ )



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.Kashf al-Murād, station (maqṣad) ٣, chap. ٣, issue ١١ -١

( يُكَلِّفُ اللّهُ نَفْسًا إِلاَّ وُسْعَهَا )

"Allah does not task any soul beyond its capacity."(1)

**The Ash'arīs and the Permissibility of Unbearable Obligation**

The Ash'arīs regard the unbearable obligation as permissible because according to them, no action is intrinsically good or bad, and goodness and evil originate from the Divine command and prohibition. There is no reason, therefore, for the badness of an unbearable obligation, but on its occurrence there are two views being presented. Some of them who have considered it a reality have mentioned God's knowledge of actions as the origin of the fatalistic nature of actions.

For instance, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī was of the opinion that the obligation of the unbelievers who have left this world in a state of unbelief is like the unbearable obligations, because God has foreknowledge that they will not have faith and God's knowledge is not violable. (2) In the words of Taftazānī, however, they do not really believe in the occurrence of unbearable obligation because God Himself has negated it.(3)

The Ash'arīs have cited some verses of the Qur'an in proving the permissibility of unbearable obligation.(4)

A reflection on these verses makes it clear that they have no proof for such a claim. One of these verses is about a group of the hell-dwellers in which it is mentioned that in this world they have no ability of seeing and hearing the truth:

( مَا كَانُوا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ السَّمْعَ وَمَا كَانُوا يُبْصِرُونَ )

"For they could neither listen, nor did they used to see."(5)

A scrutiny of the verse shows that their lack of ability to hear



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۱- Sūrat al-Baqarah ۲:۲۸۶.

۲- The reply to this objection is given in Lesson ۳۰.

۳- Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid, vol. ۱۴, pp. ۲۹۸-۳۰۱.

۴- For information about the verses cited by the Ash‘arīs in proving the permissibility of unbearable obligation, see the book Al-Lam‘ by Ash‘arī.

۵- Sūrat Hūd ۱۱:۲۰.

and see the truth does not mean that they were really incapable and that they were born blind and deaf. It rather means that as a result of being engrossed in corruption and disobedience, they used to abhor the truth and had no perseverance for seeing or hearing it. In usual conversations, whenever a person does not like to see another person or to hear his voice, he says, "I have no patience to listen to his words" or "I have no ability to hear his voice."(1)

This is while his faculties of seeing and hearing are healthy and he is not incapable of seeing or hearing anything. The ability which is a condition in obligation (taklīf) is understood in this sense. And it is not that all individuals must have the spirit of submission and surrender so as to be obliged.

A proof of this point is that in another verse it is stated that since they have not listened to the words of truth, the inhabitants of hell express remorse, saying that had they dealt with the truth reasonably (and not out of prejudice and obstinacy), they would not have been among the hell-dwellers:

( وَقَالُوا لَوْ كُنَّا نَسْمَعُ أَوْ نَعْقِلُ مَا كُنَّا فِى أَصْحَابِ السَّعِيرِ )

"They will further say, 'Had we but listened or used our intelligence, we should not (now) be among the Companions of the Blazing Fire!'"(2)

Their regret and remorse show that they could have listened to the truth and deal with it wisely.

Some have cited the



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۱- Zamakhsharī, Al-Kashshāf, vol. ۲, p. ۳۸۶.

۲- Sūrat al-Mulk ۶۷:۱۰.

following verse to support the permissibility, nay the occurrence of unbearable obligation:

( رَبَّنَا وَلا تُحَمِّلْنَا مَا لا طَاقَةَ لَنَا بِهِ )

"Our Lord! Lay not upon us what we have no strength to bear!"(1)

If unbearable obligation were impossible for God [to command], there would have been no need for such a request on the part of [His] servants. In fact, the conventional style is to request for whatever is realistic.(2)

This argument, in the way Taftazānī has expressed it – is incorrect, because what man has no ability to bear in this verse refers to the consequences and repercussions of his errors in relation to his Divine obligations.(3)

Another verse cited to support the notion of permissibility of unbearable obligation is this:

( يَوْمَ يُكْشَفُ عَنْ سَاقٍ وَيُدْعَوْنَ إِلَى السُّجُودِ فَلا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ )

"The day when the catastrophe occurs, and they are summoned to prostrate themselves, they will not be able [to do it]."(4)

This argument is equally incorrect because the Day of Resurrection is not the arena of obligation but rather the court of reckoning and accountability:

اَليومَ عَمَلٌ وَلا حِسابَ وَغَدًا حِسابٌ وَلا عَمَلَ.

"Today is that of action and not reckoning while tomorrow is that of reckoning and not action."(5)

The call for prostration or the command to it, therefore, is not taklīf; it is rather meant to foster the feeling of regret and remorse; that is, on the Day of Resurrection they will find out that human felicity depends on prostration and humility to God and since they were among the arrogant in

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۱- Sūrat al-Baqarah ۲:۲۸۶.

۲- Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid, vol. ۴, p. ۳۰۱.

۳- Al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qur’ān, vol. ۲, p. ۴۴۵.

۴- Sūrat al-Qalām ۶۸:۴۲.

۵- Nahj al-Balāghah, Sermon ۴۲.

.the world, they will incur the Divine wrath

It is here that in order for them to better discern the retribution for their arrogance, they will be asked to prostrate but they will not be able to do so. Or, since the Day of Resurrection is not the arena for action or since the quality of arrogance has become deeply embedded in their nature, they will not be able to express humility ((prostration) even on the Day of Resurrection.(١

**Review Questions**

?What is the meaning of taklīf .١

.Write down the classification of taklīf according to connections .٢

.State the classifications of taklīf according to its type .٣

?What is the first proof of the good aspect of taklīf .۴

.State the second proof of the good aspect of taklīf .۵

.Write down the third and fourth proofs of the good aspect of taklīf .۶

.Write down the fifth proof of the good aspect of taklīf .٧

?What is the important condition of taklīf .٨

Write down the reason for permissibility of unbearable obligation according to the .٩ .Ashʿarīs and the refutation to it

## Lesson ٢٩: The Necessity for Grace

**point**

One of the important principles and rules in the justice-oriented (ʿadliyyah) theology is that of luṭf (Divine grace) which is considered the most important theological rule (qā'idah) after that of the rational goodness and evil. The justice-oriented theologians .have proved many of the religious doctrines and beliefs on this basis

The incumbency of religious obligations, the necessity for the mission (bi‘thah) of the prophets, the incumbency of the infallibility of the prophets, the Divine promises and ,warnings



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.Al-Mīzān fī Tafsīr al-Qur’ān, vol. ۱۹, p. ۳۸۵; Al-Kashshāf, vol. ۴, p. ۵۹۵ -۱

the goodness of primary suffering, and the incumbency of imāmah (post-prophetic Divine leadership) are among the issues which are founded on this rule.

The overwhelming majority of the justice-oriented theologians have supported this rule of luṭf. In this regard, none of the famous Imāmī theologians has been reported to have any opposite view. Among the Mu'tazilī theologians, however, Bashar ibn Mu'tamar (died ۲۱۰ AH) and Ja'far ibn Ḥarb have been reported to have opposed this rule of luṭf(۱) although it is said that the said two personalities have made a recantation or disavowal of their opposition to luṭf and accepted it later. The Ash'arī theologians who denied the principle of rational goodness and evil also considered unacceptable the rule of luṭf.

It can be inferred from various proofs and pieces of evidence that this rule – like that of rational goodness and evil – is one of the earliest questions in theology which had caught the attention of the justice-oriented theologians. When dealing with the common Mu'tazilī beliefs, Shahristānī has made mention of the rule of luṭf (grace) and aṣlaḥ (most expedient). It is also said that they have a consensus of opinion that taklīf is a necessity of the Divine grace.(۲) In his book Al-Fihrist,(۳) Shaykh al-Ṭūsī has mentioned the book Al-Alṭāf as one of the treatises of Hishām ibn al-Ḥakam (died ۱۷۹ or ۱۹۹ AH).

**The Definition and Classification of Luṭf (Grace)**

In the lexicon, the word luṭf is used to mean kindness and compassion, closeness and proximity, intricacy and subtlety, secrecy and concealment, softness and openness,



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۱- Shahristānī, Al-Milal wa 'n-Niḥal, vol. ۱, p. ۶۵.

۲- Ibid., p. ۴۵.

۳- Al-Fihrist, p. ۱۷۵.

(and in the science of tajwīd,(١) talaṭṭaf means deflection (imālah).(٢)

In the theological parlance, luṭf is one of the Attributes of Action of God; that is, the Actions which are related to those who are obliged (mukallifīn) and it means that God does for those who are obliged whatever draws them to obedience [to Him] and keeps them away from sin. And this matter is concomitant with His justice and wisdom, as we will explain. The following expression is the popular definition of the :rule of luṭf

اَللُّطْفُ ما يُقَرِّبُ العِبادَ إلى الطّاعَهِ وَ يُبَعِّدُهُ عَنِ المعصِيَه.

Grace is that which makes the servant closer to obedience [to God] and keeps him" ".away from commiting sin

:The theologians have divided luṭf in two ways

First is whether the one being obliged (mukallaf) benefits from the said grace or not. Once he benefits from it and performs his obligation under the auspices of the said grace, it is called 'actualizing' (muḥaṣṣil) grace; that is, the grace which reaches the stage of materialization and actualization. Whenever the obliged person does not make use of it, that grace is called 'near-stationed' (muqarrib) grace because its role is only to pave the ground for guidance. In reality, it brings the obliged person closer to obedience [to God] although this may not be realized on account of a contrary .choice of action in the obliged person

The sum of these two divisions is encouragement and motivation. As Sayyid Murtaḍā ,has said

"Luṭf has two types: one is that through its agency the



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١ - Tajwīd (literally, elocution) refers to the rules governing pronunciation during recitation of the Qur'an. [Trans.]

٢ - Aqrab al-Mawārid, vol. ٢, p. ١١۴۴; Al-Mufradāt fī Gharīb al-Qur'ān, p. ۴۵٠; Al-Miṣbāḥ

.al-Munīr, vol. ٢, p. ٢٢۶; Al-Muʿjam al-Wasīṭ, vol. ٢, p. ٨٢۶

obliged person chooses to perform the act of obedience [to God] and without this luṭf he will not choose so. Another [type] is that through its agency the obliged person gets closer to the performance of the act of obedience, and the sum of these two is that (they play the role of motivator."(۱)

Some have considered the difference between the muqarrib and muḥaṣṣil grace in that the latter is measured with the motive behind the obligation while the former is measured with the motive behind the creation.(۲) However, first of all, this distinction cannot be found in the utterances of the justice-oriented theologians. Secondly, the motive behind the obligation is not the motive behind the creation by accident, but .rather these two are parallel to each other

The second way of dividing luṭf is according to its agent (fā'il) and in this way there are :three types of luṭf

۱. Luṭf is a direct action of God without any mediation; for example, stipulating the religious obligations, sending of the prophets, endowing them with miracle (mu'jizah), .(and presentation and setting up of ontological proofs of the Divine Unity (tawḥīd

۲. Luṭf is the direct action of the one who is the recipient; for example, reflection and thinking on the proofs of the Divine Unity and the miracles of the prophets, and .abiding by the religious orders

۳. Luṭf is the action of other obliged persons. For instance, promotion of the religious laws which is an action of the prophets is grace for those



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۱- Al-Dhakhīrah fī 'Ilm al-Kalām, p. ۱۸۶.

۲- See Al-Ilāhiyyāt, vol. ۲, pp. ۴۷-۴۸.

who are obliged, and prohibition of whatever is evil, which is a collective action of those who are obliged and whose outcome is grace for the other obliged persons.

Regarding the first type, the action of grace is incumbent upon God, and regarding the second type, it is incumbent upon God to oblige the action of grace to the obliged person. Regarding the third type, it is necessary to make it obligatory upon the other obliged persons. In this type, it is necessary for the one upon whom grace is obligatory to benefit from it somehow and to be a grace for himself, so that injustice would not be necessary for him.(١)

### The Conditions of Grace

Some conditions have been mentioned for grace and they are as follows:

١. On the ability of the obliged person (mukallaf) to discharge the obligation (taklīf), grace (luṭf) must have no role to play; that is, the ability to discharge the obligation cannot be regarded as grace, because grace differs according to the obligations, and ability is one of the conditions of obligation. Thus, as long as there is no ability, there is no obligation, and so long as there is no obligation, grace has no meaning.

٢. Grace must not lead to coercing or compelling the obliged person, because grace differs according to the obligations, and in the absence of free-will, there is no obligation. The following passage indicates the said two conditions: (٢)

وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ حَظٌّ فِی التَّمْكينِ وَلَمْ يَبلُغْ حَدَّ الإلجاءِ.

٣. There must be compatibility between grace and



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١- Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, Al-Iqtiṣād fī 'l-I'tiqād, p. ٧٨; Ibn Maytham al-Baḥrānī, Qawā'id al-Marām, p. ١١٨; 'Allāmah al-Ḥillī, Kashf al-Murād, station (maqṣad) ٣, chap. ٣, issue on grace.

٢- These two conditions are mentioned in most expressions of the theologians. See Shaykh al-Mufīd, Al-Nukta 'l-I'tiqādiyyah, p. ٣١; Kashf al-Murād, topic on grace;

.Qawā‘id al-Marām, p. ١١٧; Al-Iqtiṣād fī ’l-I‘tiqād, p. ٧٧

obligation, because grace plays as a motivator and its being a motivator with respect to the obligation depends on the existence of compatibility between them, and there must be no disconnection [between them].

4. The obliged person must be aware of the grace because without such awareness, grace cannot function as a motivator. Of course, in this regard, synoptic knowledge is also enough. For example, he must be aware that some hardships and afflictions he is experiencing are due to his inattention to God and his continued indulgence in sins.(1)

## Reasons behind the Necessity for Grace

### The proof of wisdom

The most prominent rational proof of the incumbency of grace upon God is the principle of the Divine wisdom in the sense that abandonment of grace necessitates reversal of the motive which, in turn, is incompatible with wisdom, and it is invalid. Acting upon grace is thus incumbent. As Muḥaqqiq al-Ṭūsī has said,

وَاللُّطْفُ واجِبٌ لِيَحْصُلَ الْغَرَضُ بِهِ.

"Grace is incumbent so as to materialize the motive."(2)

To elaborate, God has made religious obligations incumbent upon the human beings. Acting upon the obligations, therefore, is desirable and pleasing to God. Meanwhile, He knows that if He does not act upon grace, the necessary ground for the realization of obligations cannot be paved, and God's acting upon grace necessitates no warning.

In this case, abandonment of grace is rationally regarded as reversal of motive. For instance, someone holds a party and he seriously wants a certain person to be present in the said party. He knows that if he follows a certain protocol in inviting him,



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1- Ibid.

2- Kashf al-Murād, station (maqṣad) ٣, chap. ٣, topic on grace.

the said guest will attend the party, otherwise the latter will not accept the invitation. Now, if he tries to invite him without observing the said protocol, it will rationally be considered reversal of the motive to invite someone to that party.(1)

### God's generosity and munificence

In his book Awā'il al-Maqālāt, Shaykh al-Mufīd has explained the incumbency of grace on the basis of God's generosity and munificence, saying thus:

إنَّ ما أَوْجَبَهُ أصْحابُ اللُّطفِ مِنَ اللُّطفِ إنَّما وَجَبَ مِنْ جَهَهِ الجودِ وَالْكَرَمِ.dcvi

That is to say that providing the means and conditions that encourage those who are obliged to act upon the religious laws and keep them away from sins is one of the manifestations of God's generosity and munificence on those who are obliged, and for God to abandon generosity and munificence is a flaw and impossibility. As such, acting upon grace is incumbent [upon Him].

Given this, the reply to this objection becomes clear: acting upon the dictates of generosity and munificence is deigned and unnecessary, whereas the action of luṭf is obligatory. So, how can it be possible to explain an obligatory action on the basis of something not obligatory?

The reply is that in the theological parlance, incumbency (wujūb) with respect to the actions of God does not mean jurisprudential incumbency; it rather means that concomitance between perfection in action and perfection in the Divine Essence and Attributes of Essence. Once generosity and munificence are among the existential perfections, abandonment of it is impossible for God, as in the case of justice and goodness.

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1- Qawā'id al-Marām, pp. ١١٧-١١٨.

theologians mean by the rational incumbency of actions upon God is that any action whose agent is worthy of blame cannot come from God, the Exalted.(1)

In principle, regarding the stipulation of the religious obligations by God, three assumptions can be thought of:

1. God stipulates the obligations and announces them to those who are obliged, and He provides them with the necessary means and preliminary grounds for discharging them.

2. In addition to what have been said, He puts those who are obliged in certain conditions wherein they have no option but to discharge those obligations.

3. Apart from announcing the obligations and giving ability to them, as mentioned in the first assumption, He does certain things for them such that even if He does not compel those who are obliged to discharge their obligations, as mentioned in the second assumption, He plays a role in encouraging and persuading them to discharge their obligations, for example, by giving promise of rewards to the obedient and threat of punishment and chastisement to the disobedient.

Among the abovementioned assumptions, the second is rationally unacceptable as it is incompatible with the philosophy of obligation which is providing of test to the servants [of God] and development of their spiritual endowments. The first assumption is also inconsistent with the generosity, munificence and wisdom of God.

The third assumption, therefore, is the correct one, and this is harmonious with the rule of luṭf.(2)

**The Qur'an and the Rule of Grace**

It can be clearly inferred from a study of Qur'anic verses that the sending down (bi'thah) of the

۱- Gawhar-e Murād, p. ۲۴۷.

۲- Mīrzā Abū ’l-Ḥasan Sha‘rānī, Tarjumeh wa Sharḥ-e Kashf al-Murād, p. ۴۶۰.

prophets, their unique attitude and practical conduct, the revelation of heavenly books, declaration of the Divine knowledge in the framework of simple and expressive parables and expressions, the Divine warnings and glad tidings through the prophets, difficulties and afflictions, material blessings and bounties, and Unseen help and succor are all regarded as manifestations and expressions of the Divine grace – some of which are concomitant with the Divine wisdom while others are .manifestations of generosity and munificence of God

The Holy Qur'an has regarded prophethood (nubuwwah) as a manifestation of God's :mercy, as it says thus

( أَهُمْ يَقْسِمُونَ رَحْمَهَ رَبِّکَ )

(Is it they who dispense the mercy of your Lord?"(۱"

This verse was a reply to the narrow-minded people who said in protest to the Holy Prophet (ṣ), "Why was the Qur'an not revealed to two prominent men of Arabia (Walīd "?(ibn Mughayrah and 'Urwah ibn Mas'ūd

( وَقَالُوا لَوْلا نُزِّلَ هَذَا الْقُرْآنُ عَلَى رَجُلٍ مِنَ الْقَرْيَتَيْنِ عَظِيمٍ )

And they said, 'Why was not this Qur'an sent down to some great man from the two" (cities?"(۲

The Holy Qur'an has regarded the soft disposition and flexibility of the Prophet (ṣ) and refraining from harsh treatment of the people as signs of God's mercy upon him and :the people, stating thus

( فَبِمَا رَحْمَهٍ مِّنَ اللّهِ لِنتَ لَهُمْ وَلَوْ کُنتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لاَنفَضُّواْ مِنْ حَوْلِکَ )

It is by Allah's mercy that you are gentle to them; and had you been harsh and" (hardhearted, surely they would have scattered from around you."(۳

God thus admonishes Prophet Mūsā

۱- ۴۳:۳۲ Sūrat al-Zukhruf.

۲- ۴۳:۳۲ Sūrat al-Zukhruf.

۳- ۳:۱۵۹ Sūrat Āl ‘Imrān.

:Moses) and Prophet Hārūn (Aaron) (‘a) in dealing with Pharaoh)

( اذْهَبَآ إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّهُ طَغَىٰ فَقُولاَ لَهُ قَوْلاً لَّيِّنًا لَّعَلَّهُ يَتَذَكَّرُ أَوْ يَخْشَىٰ )

Let the two of you go to Pharaoh. Indeed he has rebelled. Speak to him in a soft“ (manner; maybe he will take admonition or fear.”(1

From the viewpoint of the Qur’an, the sending (bi‘thah) of the prophets as bearers of good news and as warners has completed the argument (ḥujjah) for the people, :thereby giving no more room for complaint

( رُسُلًا مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنْذِرِينَ لِئَلا يَكُونَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَى اللَّهِ حُجَّةٌ بَعْدَ الرُّسُلِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا )

apostles, as bearers of good news and warners, so that mankind may not have any...“ argument against Allah, after the [sending of the] apostles; and Allah is all-mighty, all- (wise.”(2

The phrase “all-mighty, all-wise” (‘azīzan, ḥakīman) indicates that no one has any right or argument against God. Since He is all-wise, however, wisdom necessitates guidance of the people in its most perfect form. So, He has sent the prophets so that apart from conveying the Divine laws to the people, they could encourage them by giving glad tidings and warning to act upon those laws and to refrain from disobeying .God

From the viewpoint of the Qur’an, the philosophy of some adversities and afflictions in human life is to bring them to their senses and to strengthen the spirit of submission :to the Divine commands in them

( وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِى قَرْيَهٍ مِّن نَّبِىٍّ إِلاَّ أَخَذْنَا أَهْلَهَا بِالْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَضَّرَّعُونَ )

We did not“



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۱- Sūrat Ṭā Hā ۲۰:۴۳-۴۴.

۲- Sūrat al-Nisā’ ۴:۱۶۵.

send a prophet to any town without visiting its people with stress and distress so that (they might entreat [for Allah's forgiveness]."(1)

There are many other verses that talk about God's wisdom, grace and mercy and .their manifestations in the life of man for his guidance toward the Straight Path

### (Divine Grace and Sayings of the Imāms ('a

A statement which has been transmitted from Imām 'Alī ('a) regarding the purpose behind the creation of man and the philosophy of obligation has astounded many thinkers. As Jāḥiẓ (died ۲۵۵ AH) has said, "This utterance is the most comprehensive in this regard." After affirming this acknowledgment of Jāḥiẓ, Abū 'Alī Jubbā'ī (died ۳۰۳ AH) has also said, "In terms of comprehensiveness, this utterance is in such a level (that knows no room for improvement or defect."(2)

:Imām 'Alī's ('a) utterance is as follows

Allah created the human beings and wanted them to have pleasant attitude and" character, and He knew that they will not be such unless He informs them of the source of their gains and losses, and this depends on command and prohibition (religious obligations). Command and prohibition, in turn, necessitate promise and threat, hope and fear, and their realization depend on [experiencing] adversities and prosperities. For this reason, He has mixed the life in this world with pleasant and unpleasant things so as to guide them toward the otherworldly pleasures and (sufferings."(3)

In the speech of the esteemed daughter of the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) delivered after the demise of her beloved father in the grand mosque of Madīnah, some



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.Sūrat al-A'rāf ۷:۹۴ -۱

.Biḥār al-Anwār, vol. ۵, p. ۳۱۶ -۲

.Ibid -۳

of these manifestations of the Divine grace are pointed out. At the outset, the said immaculate lady talked about the purpose behind the creation and identified it as establishment of God's wisdom and reminding the people to obedience and servitude [to God]. She then made mention of the philosophy behind the Divine rewards and punishments as admittance of the obedient ones to paradise and keeping them out of hell:

اِبْتَدَعَ الأشْياءَ لا مِنْ شَىءٍ كانَ قَبْلَها... تَثْبيتاً لِحِكمَتِهِ، وَتَنْبيهاً عَلَى طاعَتِهِ... وَتَعَبُّدًا لِبَرِيَّتِهِ، ثمّ جَعَلَ الثَّوابَ عَلى طاعَتِهِ، وَوَضَعَ العِقابَ عَلى مَعصِيَتِهِ، زِيادَةً لِعِبادِهِ مِنْ نَقِمَتِهِ، وَحِياشَةً لهم إلى جَنَّتِهِ.

"He created the things without anything there prior to them... in order to establish His wisdom and remind them (people) of obedience to Him and urge them to servitude [to Him]... Then, He set reward for obedience to Him and punishment for disobedience to Him so as for His servants to be wary of His vengeance and be drawn toward His paradise."(١)

## Reply to the Objections

There are some objections to the rule of luṭf which we must mention and refute here:

١. The rule of luṭf necessitates determining an obligation for God. After pointing out the Mu'tazilī viewpoint on the incumbency of recompense and grace on God, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī has said, "Ruling (ḥukm) cannot be affirmed except through the Divine law (shar'), and there is no judge who is superior to the Law-giver in that he could oblige Him to do something."(٢)

The reply to this objection was given in the section related to the rational



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١- The utterance of Ṣiddīqah al-Ṭāhirah (Fāṭimah) ('a) is very similar to that of Imām 'Alī ('a) concerning the philosophy of creation and the Divine bounties. The same is true with regards to the other parts of her speech. This fact points to the correctness of the perfect compatibility of this couple. As stated in the tradition (ḥadīth), had there been no Imām 'Alī ('a), there could not have been found anyone who could duly be her

.husband. See Biḥār al-Anwār, vol. ۴۳, section (bāb) ۲, ḥadīth ۱۱

.Talkhīṣ al-Muḥaṣṣil, p. ۳۴۲ -۲

goodness and evil, and its gist is that “incumbency upon Allah” (wujūb ‘alallāh) in the theological parlance does not mean juristic or legislative incumbency but rather rational incumbency. That is, the materialization of what the essential perfections of God necessitate is incumbent upon Him. In other words, perfection in His Essence and Attributes necessitates perfection in His Action.

۲. If luṭf were incumbent upon God, there would have been no more unbeliever and sinner because God can express His grace to each of the human race to such an extent that all will believe in Him and obey His commands.[1]

This objection is caused by not paying attention to one of the conditions of the Divine grace (luṭf) and that is the absence of compulsion or coercion. Once the principle of free-will is supposed to be observed, luṭf cannot be the overall cause of faith and obedience; it is rather the effect of luṭf through the man’s free-will or will power.

Now, it is possible for a person who is under the sway of satanic inclinations, instincts and insinuations not to pay attention to the Divine grace and be inclined toward unbelief and sin by his own free-will. Unbelief and sin, therefore, cannot be the proof for the non-realization of grace by God.[2]

۳. The role of luṭf is not more than generating motive for having faith and obedience on the obliged person (mukallaf) and to urge him to obey God. This is also possible without the Divine grace and God has also power

p: ۳۰۷

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۱- Sharḥ al-Uṣūl al-Khamsah, p. ۳۵۲, quoting Bashar ibn Mu‘tamar.

۲- Kashf al-Murād wa Sharḥ Tajrīd Qawshajī, topic on grace.

on anything possible. In this case, the action of grace will be vain and senseless and (this is incompatible with the Divine wisdom.(۱)

Once this objection is made about luṭf, it will also be applicable to all matters related to the guidance of humanity. The goal of prophethood (nubuwwah), for instance, is nothing but informing mankind of the Divine laws and encouraging them to worship and render servitude to Him. Without prophethood, this is also possible and God has also power on anything possible. Hence, the sending of the prophets must be vain and .senseless

The said objection, therefore, is applicable neither to the rule of luṭf nor to other matters because the Divine guidance is full of wisdom and based upon causation. Even if we deny the principle of causation and replace it with "the habit of Allah" (ʿādat Allāh), as the Ashʿarīs do, still the said objection is not justifiable because there is no doubt that the Divine guidance has a specific system. Now, this system is based either ."on the principle of causation or the principle of "the habit of Allah

**Review Questions**

۱. State the position of the rule of luṭf among the justice-oriented (ʿadliyyah) .theologians

۲. Write down the meaning of luṭf (grace).

۳. State the classifications of luṭf.

۴. What are the conditions of luṭf.

۵. What are the muḥaṣṣil and muqarrab luṭf?

۶. Explain the classification of luṭf according to the agent (fāʿil).

۷. Write down the first proof of the incumbency of luṭf.

۸. Write down the second proof of the incumbency of

.Talkhīṣ al-Muḥaṣṣil, p. ٣٤٢ quoting Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī -١

luṭf.

۹. Concerning God’s stipulation of the religious obligations, how many assumptions can be conceived of? Which of these assumptions is compatible with the rule of luṭf?

۱۰. How can the rule of luṭf be inferred from the verses of the Qur’an?

۱۱. Explain the rule of luṭf while taking into account the traditions of the Infallibles (ma‘ṣūmīn) (‘a).

۱۲. Write down Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī’s objection to the rule of luṭf along with the refutation to it.

۱۳. Write down the second objection to the rule of luṭf along with the refutation to it.

۱۴. Write down the third objection to the rule of luṭf along with the refutation to it.

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## About center

In the name of Allah

هَلْيَسْتَوِيالَّذِينَيَعْلَمُونَوَالَّذِينَلَايَعْلَمُونَ

?Are those who know equal to those who do not know

al-Zumar: ۹

:Introduction

Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan, from ۲۰۰۷, under the authority of Ayatollah Haj SayyedHasanFaqihImami (God blesses his soul), by sincere and daily efforts of university and seminary elites and sophisticated groups began its activities .in religious, cultural and scientific fields

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Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan in order to facilitate and accelerate the accessibility of researchers to the books and tools of research, in the field of Islamic science, and regarding the multiplicity and dispersion of active centers in this field

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:Appreciation

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:Address of the central office
Isfahan, Abdorazaq St, Haj Mohammad JafarAbadei Alley, Shahid Mohammad HasanTavakkoly Alley, Number plate ۱۲۹, first floor
Website: www.ghbook.ir
Email: Info@ghbook.ir
Central office Tel: ۰۳۱۳۴۴۹۰۱۲۵
۰۲۱ ـ Tehran Tel: ۸۸۳۱۸۷۲۲
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